A

VOYAGE

IN THE

INDIAN OCEAN AND TO BENGAL.

VOL. I.

A VOYAGE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND TO BENGAL,

Undertaken in the Years 1789 and 1790:

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE SECHELLES ISLANDS AND TRINCOMALE;

The Character and Arts of the People of India;

WITH SOME REMARKABLE RELIGIOUS RITES

OF THE INHABITANTS OF BENGAL.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A VOYAGE IN THE RED SEA;

INCLUDING

A DESCRIPTION OF MOCHA,

AND OF THE TRADE OF THE ARABS OF YEMEN;

WITH SOME PARTICULARS OF THEIR MANNERS, CUSTOMS, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

L. DE GRANDPRÉ,

An Officer in the French Army.

WITH ENGRAVINGS, AND A VIEW OF THE CITADEL OF CALCUTTA.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. AND J. ROBINSON,

PATERNOSTER-ROW;

By S. Hamilton, Falcon-court, Fleet-street.

1803.

VOYAGE

IN THE

INDIAN OCEAN, &c.

I WAS at the Isle of France in the year 1790, with a vessel too large and too sharp for the country. Not being able to dispose of her, I resolved on a trip to Bengal, where I hoped to find a good price and a ready market, though her construction was ill adapted to the navigation of the Ganges. But appearances being in her favour, this defect I trusted would be overlooked, and I was not mistaken.

Departure from the Isle of France.

I accordingly prepared for my departure, and was soon ready for sea. Several motives, and economy among the rest, determined me to discharge all my Euro-

peans, and work the ship with black Indians, known by the name of Lascars; but, finding it impossible to procure them, I was under the necessity of putting up with thirty Manillese, whose pusillanimity and want of skill rendered the passage extremely difficult.

The first vexation I experienced was their causing me to miss the harbour of the Isle of Bourbon, where I intended to have taken in fresh provisions. I was therefore obliged to steer for the Sechelles-Islands, and I considered it as an instance of good fortune, that I arrived there in safety, after traversing a dangerous archipelago, in which navigation is subject to a number of manœuvres, that require an experienced crew.

Arrival at the Sechelles-Islands.

After four days of anxiety and labour, I arrived upon the Sechelles' bank. Those who are desirous of having a correct idea of this cluster of islands and rocks, may be fully gratified by the chart of the che-

valier Grenier. My approach to the bank was announced by the lead, and the *Isle aux Frégates* being in sight confirmed my situation. At six o'clock in the evening I made that small island, and directed my course for Mahé, the capital of these establishments, which the distance yet prevented me from perceiving. I was then in thirty fathom water.

The night was extremely tempestuous, and the next day, about eight in the morning, I discovered Mahé, where I came to anchor at three in the afternoon. The governor was an officer of engineers detached from the Isle of France, and I received from him all the attention and assistance I could desire.

The Sechelles form a small and distinct archipelago in the midst of the large one to the north of the Isle of France. They are elevated above a bank of sand, which entirely surrounds them. Their name is a compliment paid to Mr. de Sechelles;

and the principal port derives its appellation in like manner from Mr. Mahé de la Bourdonnaie, the governor, to whom the colony of the Isle of France is indebted for its beginning splendour.

It is singular, that islands should have soundings, as these have, at a great distance from shore; and it is a circumstance at the same time extremely advantageous to mariners, who, when in search of them, can neither well miss them, nor come upon them unexpectedly, so as to endanger their vessel.

Among this group of islands some are nothing more than barren rocks; but four of them, Mayé, St. Anne, Praslin, and Frégates, contain water, and are capable of cultivation. Mahé is the principal and largest, and is about five leagues in circumference. It is of a secondary height, that is to say, upwards of a thousand feet, as I guessed at least, for I had no time to make exact observations. The whole

island is a continued mountain, having several peaks without any considerable vallies between them. It is primitive or granitic, and the bare sides of the peaks, rising perpendicularly, discover, in many places, granite in its purity.

This mountain, as well as those the tops of which compose the other islands, have undoubtedly served as a resting-place, against which the ocean, gradually depositing its sediments, has formed the bank that surrounds them; and they will therefore, in a course of time, be united, in all probability, into one island.

Formation of the bank.

Let us for a moment attend here to the physical changes of the globe, and the gradual organisation of banks and masses from materials which the sea heaps together in her bosom. The form of the Sechelles' bank appears to furnish matter for reflexion on the subject. If we remark, that the currents in the track of the general winds always follow the impulse of

those winds, that is here, always run to the north-west, we shall easily conceive, that these peaks of granite, uniting together at the base at a certain depth, have collected, for a long succession of ages, all the loose matter and extraneous bodies which the waves and tides have thrown in their way: driven against the south-west points of these peaks, these materials have been stopped there, and have formed the bank above which the Sechelles-Islands rise.

To this it will perhaps be objected, that some islands have their anchorage to leeward, as, for instance, the Isles of France and Bourbon, and those of St. Helena and Ascension, where no soundings are found to windward, and which have all a small bank on the opposite side to the current. The answer is simple: these islands are volcanic. The Isle of France bears such evident vestiges of an irruption, that lava is found at every step. That of Bourbon is burning at present; the peak of Salazes

is a volcano; and St. Helena still exhibits the traces of flames on her mountains. As to Ascension, its conflagration is so recent, that its soil is nothing but ashes; it has not yet had time to recover its springs, and a drop of water is accordingly not to be found through the whole island.

Whether these islands are the wreck of a mutilated continent, or have been thrown up by a submarine explosion, which I should rather admit, their formation has been accompanied by accidents that have given cause for the accumulation of the banks in question, which have no relation whatever to those gradually organised by the sea. These islands are too new for the ocean to have had time to throw up against them the materials, which form shelves and masses accumulated in the silence of ages.

The bank which surrounds the Sechelles extends a considerable distance to leeward; but nothing can thence be concluded against what I have advanced. For

this fact to subvert my theory, it would be necessary that the isle of Mahé should be alone; whereas it is comprised in an archipelago situated in the midst of two others still more extensive, and at no great distance apart. It is evident, that at various depths, never very considerable, these islands are all joined together at the base, from the northern extremity of the Laccadives even to the Isles of France and Bourbon. The mountains of this continent form the islands that are perceptible and known to us; and many others must exist, that, from their want of elevation, are condemned to remain submerged. The isle of Mahé is surrounded by tops of this kind, which, unable to rise above the waves, have only intercepted the materials dragged on by the ocean in its course: they are now covered, and form the bank, the figure of which answers to their situation. It is probable, that the leeward part of the Sechelles' bank will not be left dry till long after that to windward; because the currents, having now

no obstacle opposed to them, carry off with them into the immensity of the deep the extraneous bodies which escape from the islands of this archipelago; while, on the contrary, the isle of Mahé and the rest, opposing a barrier to the tides, force them to deposit the sediments they contain on the point of resistance. This hypothesis is proved almost to evidence; for the bank of the Sechelles is elevated considerably to windward, so that we find only a very small depth of water in the direct line of the tides, that is to say, to the south-east, and this depth must necessarily diminish daily. In short, if any thing can give weight to my conjecture, it is, that the harbour of the Sechelles very sensibly becomes shallower, as does that also of the Isle of France: which demonstrates, not only that the ocean collects in those places the extraneous bodies by which they are organised, but also, that its easy and gradual retreat takes place in these climates in the same uniform man-

ner as our philosophers have remarked in other parts of the globe.

Mountains.

As to the form of mountains, I shall observe, that, in general, when we meet with any of which the sides are perpendicular, we need not hesitate in pronouncing them to be either primitive or volcanic; for that shape denotes either an explosion or a strong commotion. The secondary mountains, on the contrary, formed gradually by the ocean of materials incessantly collected by it, are oblique, unless they have been heaped on a steep rock; in which case, or if they have served, after their formation, as a bed for a current, they may have been hollowed by the water, or cut perpendicularly: but such examples are rare.

Since the period when the mountains of these islands were projected, in one of the great revolutions of the globe, nature has had time to gather upon them so great

a quantity of vegetable substance, that, except in places where their form would not admit of it, they are every where covered by a bed of very thick earth; and, as they have only been frequented since the present century, they produce an extremely vigorous vegetation. The isle of Mahé has but a single cluster of trees proper for ship-building, and of these a great many have been destroyed in the erection of houses; but the government of the Mauritius has taken this object into consideration, and issued decrees for its preservation, particularly the tatamaka wood, which affords the fine curved pieces used in the construction of ships.

The isle of Mahé supports three small islands nearly adjoining. The space comprised between the former and one of the latter, called St. Anne, forms a fine bay, serving as a harbour, which affords an excellent anchorage. These islands are surrounded by an immense quantity of coral; probably the original matter of which the

fragments heaped together by the ocean gradually form the banks and islands which the sea organises.

The coral here forms shelves of great extent; they rise to the very surface of the sea; but at the bottom of the bay, opposite Mahé, nature has made a narrow channel, proceeding in a serpentine direction to the shore, and admitting a great depth of water. This place is commonly called Barachouas, and, in case of necessity, might be made an harbour. The passage is very well adapted for that purpose, having perpendicular banks of coral on each side, which form a quay even with the water's edge; so that the channel is never exposed to the roughness of the sea.

Vessels wishing to enter there carry a grapnel to the coral banks, and thus moor without the trouble of dropping an anchor.

The possession of these islands is of the greatest importance to France; and she

took care therefore to secure them, as soon as the colony of the Mauritius had acquired a degree of prosperity. The port and road of the Sechelles are at so small a distance from it, as to be able to annoy its trade, and cut off its communication with India: so that, supposing they were of no other use, it must ever be of importance to the french government to prevent their falling into the hands of its enemies; but they are valuable on other accounts.

When the French succeeded in pilfering spices from the Dutch, the plants were conveyed to the Isle of France, and carefully cultivated in the king's garden: a few prosperous years, with skilful and expensive management, gave reason to hope they might be naturalised there, and government had even begun to distribute the young plants among the inhabitants, and teach them how they were to be reared; but the hurricanes soon put an end to so flattering a prospect: the settler Spices.

grew weary of the expense and extreme care necessary to the support of an object of which the profit, while it was uncertain, was also at least far distant; and the results, even in the king's garden, were by no means so satisfactory as was expected. The cinnamon produced only a light bark, triflingly unctious, and very inferior in quality to that of the Moluccas. The clove-trees dwindled; and though the plant itself appeared healthy, its fruit did not answer the expectation of government. In a word, this business was nothing more, properly speaking, than an object of curiosity: like those orange-trees in Russia, or in the north of Germany, which produce fruit by dint of attention, but the fruit is degenerate, has no taste, no flavour, and scarcely even any smell.

The Sechelles, being in a latitude similar to the Moluccas, and presenting some probability in favour of this species of cultivation, now attracted the attention of

administration. Plants were conveyed thither with the utmost secresy; and as the negro-ships generally put in at the Isle of Mahé, to procure water and turtle, care was taken to choose a place on the other side of the island, to prevent its being known, and they were deposited near the royal creek, and abandoned to nature.

Their success surpassed every hope; the cinnamon-trees, particularly, spread with such rapidity, that the canton, where-ever the lofty trees would permit them to grow, was shortly covered with them. The cloves and nutmegs succeeded also, but did not increase in the same proportion.

Things were in this state when war was declared, in 1778, between France and England. Viscount de Souillac, governor of the Isles of France and Bourbon, with their dependencies, animated by a pure and well-directed patriotism, took every precaution to prevent the enemies of the

state from seizing on the precious result of so much labour, patience, and expense; but the person charged with the execution of his orders was deficient in the judgment necessary for the execution of so important a commission. Government had generally maintained a military post on this island; but from the fear of its being surprised, it was discontinued at the commencement of the war, and an overseer only left there with a few blacks, whose orders were, to take the most effectual means of destroying the cinnamon-trees the moment the enemy should attempt to take possession of the island. Unfortunately, a large french ship from Madagascar put in to water at Mahé; and the overseer, mistaking her for an enemy, believing he should be attacked, and fearful of not having time to execute his instructions, immediately set fire to the spice-trees, and destroyed them all.

Thus perished the hopes of the French government. The birds, however, which

in general are fond of the fruit of the cinnamon-tree, had carried off a great number of berries, of which some had dropped accidentally in the woods of the interior of the islands, where they produced new plants, which were found there at the peace of 1783. Of these great care was taken; and when I visited the island, the cinnamon-, clove-, and nutmeg-trees were in good condition, though not very numerous. There is no doubt that every kind of spice might be cultivated in the Sechelles-Islands; and France, notwithstanding their little extent, derive from them a sufficient quantity for the consumption of the republic. No climate can be more favourable; and the instances I have cited incontestably prove, that the success would be complete. But, since the trials which have been made at Cayenne, it would appear that government has lost sight of the project of naturalising them on these islands.

Grants of land.

In 1790 grants of land were offered to any inhabitant of the Isle of France who wished to settle at Mahé, and soon the whole island was disposed of; but no person at that time had fixed his residence either on the isle of Pralin or that of Frégates: and as to St. Anne's, government had united it to the royal domains, to leave it for the use of ships resorting to the port, who had liberty to land their crews for the benefit of their health, without the least apprehension as to the other islands, with which, in case of contagion, all communication is cut off.

Turtle.

These settlers finding it difficult to live, much more to enjoy themselves, have neglected the spice-trees, and even destroyed them, that they might devote themselves to the cultivation of rice, maize, manioc, cocoa-trees, and to fishing for turtle. This last article presented so alluring a bait to their industry, by the profit it afforded, that they pursued it with an avi-

dity which threatened in a short time the destruction of the species. Government therefore interfered, and the fishing is now subject to restrictions. As these islands had been long uninhabited, the turtle came there in abundance to lay their eggs; but now, disturbed by the inhabitants, they manifestly become every day more scarce. Government preserves the females in an inclosure on the beach, where any one may be supplied for his own consumption, but not for trade. This is an excellent resource to vessels whose crews are attacked by the scurvy. The males that are taken are always set at liberty.

These islands produce also a kind of cocoa peculiar to themselves, called sea or twin cocoa; the fruit perfectly represents the human posteriors, and is in request through all Asia, on account of its scarceness. Sea cocoa.

The soil of the Sechelles is new, and consequently extremely fertile: indigo is Productions.

indigenous there; all the plants prosper; horned cattle languish; but goats and pigs thrive; and poultry do well and become fat in a short time. The rice has attracted the attention of cultivators, by its superiority over any other in the world. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the colony, in its present state, is of no value; and, though it holds out great advantages, is reduced to a mere provision-warehouse for the small number of vessels that visit it: nor can it be considered in any other light till a wise administration shall think proper to restore it to its first destination.

I made some remarks on turtle at these islands, which may perhaps give birth to conjectures on a fact that has not yet fixed the attention of naturalists.

Question respecting land-tortoises.

Does the land-turtle, or tortoise, ever swim or undertake long passages by sea? To throw light upon this question, it may be useful perhaps to observe, that the Sechelles-Islands abound in this species of

tortoise. How did they come there? Moreover, tortoises taken at the isle of Pralin, deposited in the inclosure of that place, and marked on the back with a circle made by a cooper's screeving-iron, have been re-taken three leagues off on another island called *l'Isle aux Cerfs*, near the barachouas of Mahé. Others, put into the inclosure of the Isle aux Cerfs, and marked in a particular manner, have been retaken at Mahé, from which it is separated by the bay and harbour, making at least the distance of a league. This fact may be relied on: I mention it because I never heard that these tortoises undertook such long excursions by sea. The observation appears to me to be new, and I am anxious to communicate it to naturalists.

During my stay at the Sechelles I had nearly lost my boat and those of my crew who were in it. They suffered themselves to be driven on the coast by a light breeze, which their pusillanimity rendered them

unable to counteract. I feared they were carried out to sea, where they would inevitably have perished; but, fortunately, they were brought back the next day. They had run aground near the plantation of an inhabitant, who cultivated cocoa, which they pillaged without mercy, carrying off three thousand nuts, with which they laded the boat. The planter, whom I begged to set a value upon his loss, was satisfied with thirty spanish dollars, which I paid without hesitation.

Departure from the Sechelles.

Every thing being ready for my departure, I weighed anchor and stood to the north, keeping that course till I came within nine degrees north latitude, in order to pass between the Laccadives and the Maldives. The day on which I reached the passage was marked by the loss of a sailor, a Manillese, who fell into the sea while he was employed in bending a new fore-sail. The poor fellow swam like a fish, and at first diverted himself by calling to each of the crew by name, in-

Sailor drowned.

viting them to jump in and bathe with him. It was then about four o'clock in the afternoon, the wind began to freshen, and the ship was going at the rate of little more than three miles an hour. The officer who had the watch put about in an instant; a hen-coop, some buoys, and other things, were thrown overboard to assist him, but he jestingly disdained them, hoping by dint of skill to come up with the vessel. At last a cask was hove out, with a lead-line fastened to it of two hundred fathoms, to which I added upwards of four hundred fathoms of rope of different sizes, but all to no purpose; he could not get hold of it, the wind and current driving the vessel faster than he could swim. As soon as he perceived the affair to be growing serious, he was seen to exert all his force, and every now and then to lift up his arms to show himself.

Wishing to neglect no means of saving him, I had given orders for the boat to be

hoisted out: but, as it was extremely heavy, we found it impossible to do it soon enough. The Blacks of Manilla, instead of lending a hand, remained upon the gangways gazing at their shipmate, and calling to him in their language, which I did not understand; and neither blows nor exhortations could induce them to remain at the capstan, to put about the ship.

A heavy sea striking us upon the beam made the vessel roll so excessively, that all our efforts were scarcely sufficient to secure the boat and prevent accidents; at length, about seven in the evening, when we were on the point of attaining our object, it became dark. We had now lost sight of the unfortunate swimmer for more than an hour and a half; and with such miserable sailors I gave up the hope of recovering him, persuaded that if I were to lower my boat in the night in so heavy a sea to put to windward, I should endanger the whole of its crew, particularly at

a season when we were every moment exposed to a hurricane. Besides, the experience I had had of the inactivity of the Blacks, in what they had done off the Isle of Bourbon and at the Sechelles, convinced me, that their efforts would be of no avail; I therefore continued my course, leaving the unhappy wretch, who I had no doubt was by this time drowned, to his fate.

The tides during the south-west monsoon are so violent between the Maldive-Islands and the Laccadives, that we are subject to lose our reckoning, especially if we are not able to make observations of longitude. To prevent gross errors, and that a vessel may not fall in unexpectedly with the land, which might be dangerous in the night, there is one remark to be made, which is rather of a singular nature. Nautical details.

After passing the meridian of the Maldives, and when we are between them and the coast of Malabar, there is seen on the Serpents.

surface of the water a great number of living serpents, floating without movement, their bodies rolled up, the head erect, and the look stedfast. They begin to appear as soon as we get within the Maldives; but they are not very numerous till we arrive at about eight or ten leagues from the coast, and their numbers increase as we approach. It is supposed, that they are forced down the rivers of the coast of Malabar, which are swelled by the abundant rains that prevail at that season, and which carry off with them whatever they meet in their passage. These floods are sometimes so considerable, that the sea is tinged by them six or seven leagues from the shore.

Land.

Two days after losing the Manillese I have mentioned, I discovered land about six in the evening. The weather was thick and cloudy, with rain and light airs at intervals. I found myself too near the coast, and hauled my wind to stand off. I was borne by the currents with astonish-

ing rapidity; in the evening the rain increased, and the wind fell quite calm. As, however, there was a very heavy swell, the ship rolled considerably, and the wet sails, by beating against the masts, were soon rent to pieces. It became necessary to unbend the topsails, and thus for a while to remain under bare poles, exposed to whatever heaven might please to ordain. While fresh sails were bending, I ordered the lead to be hove constantly; and I saw with pleasure, that the tide carried me on the course I wished to go as accurately as if I had been able to manage the ship.

About eleven o'clock the swell became less, and in the course of a few minutes was completely gone: then the sea seemed on a sudden to be on fire. This phenomenon has been observed by several navigators, who have described it. I find it impossible to give an idea of its appearance: the light does not resemble that produced by the track of a vessel and fish in phosphoric seas; it is absolutely

Phosphoric sea.

fire, or at least appears to be so, and it extends to the utmost limits of the horizon, so that the ship seems to swim on a burning ocean. The sea was gently agitated, and each undulation foamed like the waves of a river when the wind sets against the stream. It was this foam that sparkled, each small surge resembling a body of fire.

The crew was very much terrified, and even the officers were alarmed. I explained the wonder, and told them, that it was by no means novel. I repeated what captain Cook had said on the subject, and observed to them, that this phenomenon was particularly mentioned by navigators as common near the Maldives. Wishing to prove to them still more satisfactorily that their fears were absurd, and that they had not the least danger to apprehend, the fire which they saw being nothing more, according to report, than a small phosphoric animal, I ordered a bucket of water to be drawn up and pre-

served till the next day, intending to examine it with them attentively. The sea appeared thus inflamed for the space of half an hour, when it wholly disappeared. The next day I inquired for the bucket of water, but it was not to be found; curiosity had fled with the fear of danger, and they preferred relying on my explanation, to giving themselves the trouble of examining what could have caused the phenomenon. To my great regret I thus lost an opportunity of making remarks on an object, which has justly excited the curiosity of the learned, and on which nothing satisfactory has yet been advanced. All that I was able to observe was, that as soon as the water was in the bucket it lost its brilliancy, and differed in no respect from its ordinary appearance.

Arrival at Pondicherry.

I continued my course, standing for the southern point of Ceylon; and, coasting round that island, arrived at Pondicherry nineteen days after my departure from the Isle of France. I had the misfortune,

in mooring ship, to cast my anchor on the wreck of a vessel, which had been so long under water, that no one was acquainted with the circumstance. The result was, that I lost it; and in endeavouring to get it up, I broke an entirely new fifteen-inch cable. Mr. de Rozili, commander of the frigates *La Meduse* and *La Station*, gave me another to supply its place: he attempted also to recover mine; but by the effort he made he broke his tackle, and increased a leak in the fore part of his ship, that admitted two inches of water in an hour.

State of Pondicherry.

At the time of my landing at Pondicherry, that place, formerly the bulwark of the French in India, had been just evacuated by Mr. Conway: for which he was very much reproached. I am inclined to believe, that he did not merit it; but it is the fate which every foreigner, who has the chief command in a nation in a state of rivality with that in which he was born, ought to expect. Mr. Conway was an Irishman; the evacuation of

Pondicherry left the English masters of India without opposition: it is therefore not surprising that suspicion should have fallen upon him.

The garrison consisted only of two hundred european infantry, a company of artillery, part of which were Caffres, and a battalion of black Spahis or Cipahis. The park of artillery was evacuated, and all the ammunition sent to the Isle of France. It may be proper here to take a rapid glance at the policy of the French in India.

The power of the french company in Asia was once equal to that of the english company. Madras submitted to its arms under the command of La Bourdonnaie; and the genius of governor Dupleix frustrated all the attempts of its enemies on Pondicherry: but from that time the power of France in India has continued to decline.

That able governor was well aware, that for any foreign nation to pretend to maintain itself in India as a military power, without being ably supported in the interior, either by allies, or by a sovereignty over countries sufficiently extensive to raise respectable forces, was a vain chimera. He had already been elevated to the dignity of a nabob; and if his recall to Europe had not arrested the course of his proceedings, it is impossible to calculate the consequences that might have resulted, favourable to his own country, and injurious to its enemies. After his departure, the vast plans he had formed were given up, and every thing was concentred at the Isle of France, where a place of arms was erected, and whence it was imagined, that, in case of necessity, the requisite forces and supplies might be sent to India, to maintain a footing of equality.

This system was defective, as the event proved. Pondicherry was often taken:

and the succours sent from the Isle of France were always either insufficient, or else arrived too late. But in Europe the blame was constantly thrown on those charged with the operations, without its being felt, that, when acting upon ill-concerted plans, the results of course must be ever unpropitious.

In the war of 1778 the Mauritius again failed in endeavouring to save Pondicherry: notwithstanding the vigorous defence of Mr. de Bellecombe, it was obliged to capitulate. Afterwards, when the forces under the command of Mr. de Bussy arrived in India, the idea was relinquished of re-establishing that place, which it had been found impracticable to retain. He took possession only of Goudelours and fort St. David, where the French established themselves, leaving Pondicherry open, and without defence, a prey to the first that should think proper to enter it.

That unfortunate town was destined to become a school of fortification; for the Dutch and English have never failed, when they got possession of it, to raze every thing at all connected with military defence; so that, when ceded to France after a war, it was always to be rebuilt. Mr. de la Bourdonnaie had given them an example of greater moderation when he took fort St. George at Madras. It is not my wish to reproach any nation unjustly: but it is certain, that the English have never taken but to destroy; and their conquests may be easily traced by the ruins scattered on the shores of India. They could not even spare the french lodge at Yanaon, a simple building, which they pulled down as far as the windows of the ground-floor, leaving the ruins to attest their destructive disposition. Actuated by the same principles, after the last siege of Pondicherry, they not only razed the fortifications, but even the barracks for the troops. The french government had

formerly given them some umbrage, and they now revenged themselves upon the stones.

When the french company, exhausted by losses, gave up its privilege, the royal administration took it into their own hands. It then appeared, that government was convinced of the necessity of opposing a counter-balance to the english power, which threatened to become what it is at present; and they endeavoured to open a negotiation with the republic of Mahrattas, the only power that could afford effectual support. But petty means only were employed for this purpose: the company had ruined itself by profusion, and now avarice became its substitute; no one dared to enter into engagements, and the agents of England, lavish of their gold, promising much, threatening more, and making themselves respected by a force already become formidable, soon gained the ascendancy. Again the Mau-

ritius was resorted to; and it was determined to make that place the centre of the french force to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope.

At length, a deserter from the black troops* in the garrison of Pondicherry having made a large fortune, and laid the foundations of a considerable power, government seemed desirous of resuming the project of an alliance in the interior of the peninsula. The attachment of thi man to France, and his irreconcilable hatred to England, who could never pardon his usurpation, assured to the French the support of the kingdom of Mysore. In the war of 1778, some judicious steps were taken: a French battalion, under the orders of Mr. de Cossigny, seconded his son Tippoo Saib, who greatly distinguished himself, from the hope of an irrevocable attachment to France. But all was to no purpose: Hyder Aly died; and his

* Hyder Aly.

son, at the peace of 1783, was unmercifully abandoned.

Never was there a treaty so badly concerted; for the victories just gained by Mr. de Suffrein might have been turned to advantage, in obtaining an increase of territory and some places of importance; in a word, possessions that would have yielded a revenue. The english company at that time was not in a state to refuse a few sacrifices; but, instead of their being demanded, matters were replaced on the same footing as before the war, the possession of a small territory in the environs of Karikal excepted; government had even the indiscretion to give up Goudelours and fort St. David, thereby placing an enemy's fortress between the two french possessions. In short, France seemed to have no other object in view than to obtain the independence of the english colonies in America, and, satisfied on that score, entirely neglected her establishments in India. On the coast of Malabar

she obtained nothing; Mahé was restored to her, with the same territory as she had possessed previously to the war. In Bengal, Chandernagore and its territory was also restored, without any thing being added; and it was even stipulated, that a ditch should be sunk to drain off the water. It is remarkable, that this stipulation is to be found in the former treaty of peace. Also the ruins of the citadel of this town, of which the victories of France ought to have obtained a renovation, were once more condemned to remain as they were, dispersed over the deserted country. The French were allowed indeed lodges for commerce; and they supposed themselves to have made a masterstroke of policy in stipulating for the enjoyment of an illimited trade in India. Thus, laying aside the dignity of a great state, they submitted to play an inferior part, under the empire of english pride. They pretended not to feel how useless was the condition of an illimited trade, without a sufficient power to enforce the

treaty, which the enemy might at any time elude and shackle by vexations and delays.

The event has proved how little dependence ought to have been placed on an engagement of this nature; for, a year after the peace, viscount de Souillac, who was governor-general of the french establishments, was constrained to sign a separate treaty with the english governors, by which the salt trade, the most lucrative in Bengal, was reduced to eight hundred thousand *maunds*.—A maund is seventy-five pounds.

As to Tippoo Sultan, he was not so much as mentioned in the treaty, but was abandoned in silence to the resentment of the English; and the company would instantly have crushed him, but that it was deemed more advisable to wait till the french army should have quitted India, as it was not likely that so considerable a force would be kept on so small a terri-

tory. This calculation appeared in the sequel to be just.

Surprised at so disadvantageous a peace, and alarmed at the small degree of power retained by his allies in India, and the risk he should run if they were entirely to evacuate the country, that prince solicited some time after the support of France by a solemn embassy, which he sent to Versailles; but it was too late. The french government had come to a resolution to have only factors in India; the Isle of France was again the place of arms, where all the forces were to be concentrated, and every where else the French were to appear only on the footing of merchants. This system was supported with specious arguments. The English, it was said, will be on the losing side; they will be charged with the defence of the country and all the expenses of administration, while the French will have a trade without expense: they will have the trouble, and we the profit. In this manner did

they deceive themselves: no argument could convince them, that this disadvantage was sufficient to cause the French to be excluded from a country, where their power was annihilated, by a nation sensible of her means, knowing how to turn them to profit, and determined never to recede a step when success or power attends her. The embassy of Tippoo had no other effect than that of causing England to demand a categorical answer from France, as to the intention of such a proceeding. To avoid dispute, the latter played a double part, and leaned to both sides, promising nothing certain to Tippoo, and ordering shortly after the evacuation of Pondicherry. It was at this period that the first troubles broke out in Holland. France foreseeing hostilities between the powers of Europe, and fearful of having a part in them, ordered Mr. Conway to take possession of Trincomale, a port which insures the superiority of India to whatever power possesses it. That general had an army fully sufficient for

the expedition: the place was guarded by a french regiment in the service of the dutch company (the legion of Luxembourg); of this corps he was sure: yet such was the ill design or injudicious conduct of the general, that he totally failed, and, having done nothing, returned to Pondicherry, which he evacuated some time after.

During this expedition Pondicherry was left open and defenceless. The chevalier de Fresne, however, a very active and able officer, animated with sentiments of honour, and attachment to the glory of his country, being commandant of the place, exerted himself so effectually, that in a short time he covered the town on the northern side, and extended the fortifications to the gate of Vilnour, comprising two-thirds of its circumference.

Evacuation.

The general, returning from his fruitless cruise, to his astonishment found the

town in a state capable of making some defence. This circumstance, certainly, was no reason for abandoning it; but, whatever were his motives, he took this opportunity of putting the orders he had before received into execution, and departed for the Isle of France, followed by his forces and stores. Such precipitation raised the greater outcry against him, as he had been indiscreet enough to take a journey to Madras to see one of his old friends—a circumstance which malevolence did not fail to interpret to his disadvantage. Every thing, in fact, conspired to put the english company in possession of Pondicherry. The evacuation was so badly contrived, that this unfortunate colony was left without even a possibility of making use of the small means of defence that remained: a few pieces of cannon were still in its possession; but the balls left behind were of a different caliber. The resolution, however, of the chevalier de Fresne triumphed over every obstacle: he obtained a reinforcement of two hun-

dred infantry, formed and disciplined a battalion of Cipahis, and succeeded in guarding the town.

Description of Pondicherry.

Pondicherry has been always ill fortified; that is to say, defended on a bad system: the object has constantly been to shelter the whole town, instead of building a strong citadel, and making merely a simple curtain to put the town out of danger of an attack with cavalry. Madras is fortified in this manner, and the English have found the benefit of it. Mr. de Lalli's attempts on it were fruitless; the capture of the town did not advance him an inch towards the citadel, of which he was obliged to raise the siege.

Pondicherry is built in a circular form, on the borders of the sea, the coast describing a chord, of which the ramparts were the sector. The radius is very considerable, as the sector was dodecagon, giving thirteen bastions and twelve ravelins, without reckoning the shore. A

place like this requires a garrison of thirteen thousand men, according to Mr. de Vauban's scale of proportion, allowing five hundred men to each piece: and though the situation of the town, by facilitating its defence, may allow this number of troops to be in some degree diminished, it must be observed, that I omit the sea-shore, which, if fortified, ought to be made able to act against a fleet, which would require an additional number of men: so that, every allowance made, a garrison of twelve thousand men would at least be necessary to defend Pondicherry, according to the rules of art, against an enemy who might attack it methodically, with the same means as are employed in Europe. On the contrary, had a good pentagon, or even a fort royal, been constructed, fifteen hundred men would have been sufficient; the expense of construction too would have been diminished; and it would have required a less quantity of artillery and stores.

Fortification.

Pondicherry is advantageously situated. Covered on the south by the river Coupang, called in the portuguese language Arian-Coupang, it would be difficult to attack it regularly on that side. To the westward it is defended by an inundation, which would prevent the works necessary for an attack from being carried on, without infinite pains; and it would be difficult also to keep the water out of the trenches. Between this water and the Arian-Coupang are the road to Vilnour, and about three hundred toises of land; and here an attack might be made: but the vulnerable point of Pondicherry is to the north, as the country in that quarter is favourable for the necessary operations. An attack towards the gate of Vilnour must always be a feigned one, to engage or distract the attention: the true one must be to the north; and it is this point therefore which should be principally secured. If the same system of defence which has constantly been adopted be still

persisted in, if it be wished to fortify the whole town, as has been hitherto the practice, I conceive that Cormontaigne's method could alone effectually defend it. Mr. de Fresne, deprived of the means of constructing regular fortifications, having no tools, no stones, no bricks, no wood to burn the latter, and no money, confined himself to works of earth, which he threw up according to the first method of Vauban, without tenailles, but with a ravelin before each curtain; and as the earth in this country is apt to fly out, he gave to his ramparts a very great slope, and left at the foot of them a large berme to receive the earth that might fall down, and prevent it from filling up the ditch. The enemy having succeeded in draining the ditch during the siege which Mr. de Bellecombe sustained, attempts were made to guard against the inconvenience, by digging deep enough to attain a level lower than the river Arian-Coupang and the sheet of water; and security was thus obtained on that side. But

though the ditch was deep and broad, the earth taken out was insufficient to construct the rampart as could have been wished. The bastions were not filled: they were accordingly less spacious, and did not afford to the party in possession the means of entrenching themselves.

At the time of my arrival in this town, the south side was just finished, but no covered way could be made, nor glacis that was tolerable: neither were there any palisades; for though they had cut and bought some at Trincomale, they had neglected to bring them; and if I except the place of arms of the ravelin covering the gate of Vilnour, and a few re-entering angles on the north front, there was not a single palisade in the whole circuit of the town. Two gates were still uncovered, without even a barrier; and the causeways across the ditch, leading from these gates, were massive, with no drawbridge, nor any thing capable of defending them. The quarter towards the sea

was open, and could oppose no other resistance, in case of attack, than a small battery, *à barbette*, used for salutes, except towards the north, where there was a front in which they had contrived a gate, covered by a miserable ravelin. It was in this state when the English attacked it the last time; and how it could have held out thirteen days after the opening of the trenches is astonishing. No revetment was any where to be seen: by filling the ditch with fascines, it might have been taken by storm at the first onset; while, by advancing methodically, the mining might have been carried on to the glacis in a single day. The earth of that country is too light for mines to be effected without the assistance of masons; for they would not answer in wood, and no time had been given for their construction: the English knew very well that there were none there, and it is almost incredible that they should have taken so much precaution in their approach, and have been obliged to make two attacks. The

French at present would take a place like this in twelve hours.

Situation of the French in India.

As the king had ordered Pondicherry to be abandoned, the town would probably have been converted into a factory, if the talents of a single individual had not preserved it as a military place. The situation of the French in India was at that moment very precarious: Pondicherry was their chief establishment; and its government extended over its own territory and that of Karikal, independently of other establishments, which we shall proceed to describe.

The two possessions of Pondicherry and Karikal, together, might bring in a revenue of a lack and a half of rupees, which is a very insignificant sum. A rupee is nearly fifty sols; a lack is an hundred thousand rupees: so that a lack and a half make about three hundred and seventy-five thousand livres. This revenue was intended to suffice for the expense

not only of those two establishments, but for that of others also that might require support.

To the northward, at Masulipatam, a lodge was established, and an agent appointed, to facilitate the commerce of handkerchiefs. As this article is sufficiently known, I shall not enlarge upon the subject :—so much for the coast of Coromandel.

Karikal furnished rice and some piece goods, such as perculles, chittaras, &c. Pondicherry supplied Bengal with salt, and carried on a tolerable trade in blue dye. It was there that the white cloth sent from the north was dyed blue, and which then took the name of guinea-cloth. There also were painted chittaras and handkerchiefs *à vignette* of all kinds and on every sort of cloth. Moreover, what are called cambays, or white and blue linen, of different patterns, were fabricated there, such as chasselees, bajutapoes, neganepoes, tapseils, Manufacture of Pondicherry.

fotes, corots, handkerchiefs, brawles, cosselees, coupis, and other articles proper for trading with the Blacks, as well as a great quantity of white cloths known by the names of perculles and platilles. The dimities were procured at Goudelours. These objects united might raise, on an average, annually, about twelve or fifteen hundred thousand livres; so that the trade was contained within very circumscribed limits.

On the coast of Golconda, France possessed a considerable *aldée* called Yanaon, situate on the river Godwarin, where she established a chief, several factories, and a regular police. This aldée was very populous, being the principal mart of the french commerce in that country. It contained six extremely rich commercial houses, without including the resident, who was almost always a civil or military officer. Here the contracts were made for the white linen cloth fabricated in the neighbourhood, which was brought

in a raw state to Yanaon, where being bleached and packed up in bales, it was sent down the small river of Coringui, to the bay of the same name, where the ships received it.

From this aldée were obtained the linens called four-threads, white and raw, and those called conjons. Conjon is an assemblage of an hundred and twenty threads: as the width of the cloth never varies, the greater number of conjons there are in a piece, the finer the linens must be. They begin counting at fourteen; at twenty-six the cloth may be called fine; thirty makes very beautiful shirting; it becomes superb at thirty-six, and at fifty it amounts to the *ne plus ultra*, beyond which they no longer count by conjons. The linen is then called bastard, and is of a most admirable texture and fineness. Conjon cloth.

The linen of twenty-six conjons is the most saleable: it is worth, on an average,

thirteen rupees a piece; but the bastard cloth ought to sell for ten pagodas.

Monies. To understand these indian coins, it may be necessary to observe, that an hundred star-pagodas, in the ordinary course of exchange, are worth from three hundred and fifty-four to three hundred and sixty rupees of Pondicherry; the three-figured pagoda fetches two per cent. more, while that of Porta-Nova, the least valuable of all, is sometimes reduced to three hundred. The current value of the pagoda is nine livres.

The rupee of Pondicherry is not the highest in value, but it possesses the advantage of never varying. France has had the liberty of coining money since the period when Mr. Dupleix was invested with the title of nabob. The money was royal, and its standard fixed by the ordinances of the king: the course of exchange was two hundred and thirteen

rupees and a half for one hundred spanish dollars. The rupee of Pondicherry is known by a crescent over a moorish legend on one side. The sicca rupee is the most valuable, and is known by a palm-tree; in general, two hundred of these are equal to a hundred dollars. The arcot rupee is an article of traffic, and varies according to the demand for it.

Yanaon was certainly the place where France commercially had most to do. All her vessels were consigned to Yanaon, and the briskness of trade naturally produced a great degree of affluence. It was the most considerable aldée of the north. The sums laid out there in linen might amount, one year with another, in french and english commissions together, to twenty lacks of rupees, making nearly five millions of livres: to such a state was the commerce of the bay of Bengal reduced. Commerce.

The government of Pondicherry extended also over the small town of Mahé, situated on the coast of Malabar. This town, for- Mahé.

merly strong, populous, commercial, and the chief establishment of the French on that coast, is now reduced to nothing; it has experienced the same fate as every other place conquered by the English, namely, that of seeing its walls razed to their foundations. France has never thought of rebuilding them, and has consequently kept no military force there: the town has remained in a state of dullness and inactivity, increased by the vicinity of fort Talichery, whence the English continually menace it, and by means of which they may be considered as masters of it.

The trade of Mahé consists of pepper and beetle-nuts. It also produces a light kind of earth which serves to filter water; and which the natives have the art of making so thin and fine, that many of them, particularly women, in the habit of thus regaling themselves, do not hesitate to eat it. This earth is extremely spongy, and readily absorbs any liquid, without losing its consistency; and it often happens, after

preserves have been served up on plates made of it, that the syrup remains imbibed, and the ladies eat them.

The beetle-nut is in great request throughout India: it resembles a nutmeg, in size as well as contexture and shape, without possessing either its taste or fragrance. The inside is of a lively red colour, and has an agreeable flavour; the Indians in general consume a great quantity of these nuts.

The town of Chandernagore and the lodges of Bengal, such as those of Balassore, Patna, Dacca, and Chatigam, are also dependent on Pondicherry; and these places, with the large villages of Mahé and Karikal, the aldée or village of Yanaon, the houses of Masulipatam, with a revenue of about four hundred and twenty thousand livres, of which three hundred and seventy-five thousand arose from land, constituted the whole of the

Situation of the French in Bengal.

french power on the two coasts of India and in the province of Bengal.

To such a state was the nation reduced which formerly in this part of the globe vied with England in splendour; whilst her rival saw her flag hoisted on three principal fortresses, that secured to her the peaceable possession of the provinces she had acquired, and in which she supported, in 1791, including Blacks and Europeans, a force of twenty-five thousand men.

Having thus described the situation of the French in India, anterior to the present war, I shall add a few details on their coast establishments, before I speak of Bengal.

Trincomale.

Though Trincomale does not belong to France, is on the coast of Ceylon, and not on that of India, yet as it is situated in the bay of Bengal, as the french flag was fly-

ing there for some time, as it is become famous by the efforts of admirals Suffrein and Hugues, and as it is besides of extreme importance in time of war, the superiority in India depending on the possession of it, I shall begin with that town.

Trincomale, or Trinkenomale, belongs to the Dutch, or at least was theirs before the present war, that nation, by a treaty with the king of Ceylon, being in possession of the whole coast of that island. It was alternately taken and retaken during the war of 1778, and at last remained with the French, who faithfully resigned it to the dutch company at the peace of 1783.

The reputation of this town is certainly above its real value. The fort, properly speaking, consists but of a front fortification on the method of Marolois; it is in fact nothing more than a horn-work, whose two branches terminate on a mountain, at the foot of which it is situated, and by which it is defended behind; so that Trin-

comale can only be attacked on one side. The two branches of the horn-work are defended by the sea; or, to make myself better understood, the mountain of Trincomale is a large peninsula separated from the main land by an isthmus not exceeding two hundred toises in width, and which is barred by a front fortification. And this is the place that has made so much noise. Behind the fortification, at the foot of the mountain, is what is called the town, consisting of three small rows of houses, which form two streets. Near the foot of the mountain is also a well of very good water, the more valuable as there is no other truly drinkable to be found in the country. From the situation of this fortress, it would only be necessary to disembark a body of troops stronger than the garrison, and appear before the place, to blockade and starve it out. Its sole advantage is the being built on a rock, so that it can never be approached by mining, which must terminate about fifty toises from the foot of the rampart. When

Mr. de Suffrein took it, there were no advanced works, except indeed a shapeless heap of earth, incapable of concealing in every part the bottom of the wall; so that the battering cannon, once mounted, might have been directed advantageously, without the trouble of a regular approach. The enemy did not wait for this, but surrendered in good time.

The dutch major Von-baur has since remedied this inconvenience. That intelligent officer, with infinite patience, procured earth from other parts, and formed therewith a counterscarp and a good ditch. He constructed a ravelin, of necessity very small, as the line of defence is extremely short. The whole is surrounded by a good covered way, well pallisaded, and a glacis, by means of which it would be more easily defended against a sudden assault. The chief defect of the place is its situation.

Trincomale presents one of those striking

traits which characterise the genius of a nation. In the hands of an active and energetic government, it would have become an impregnable fortress. It might have secured to its masters the possession of the whole coast of Coromandel, from which it is distant only twenty-four hours sail; it would have served as a rallying point, both against the powers of India and those of Europe; it would have been an arsenal whence they might have derived every means of attack and defence in the peninsula; and its harbours and road would have admitted of a formidable naval establishment: in a word, Trincomale, in the possession of an enterprising nation, might have become the capital of India. Calcutta, which now enjoys that pre-eminence, is situated much less favourably for war.

Instead of feeling these advantages, the Dutch contented themselves with making it a small post just capable of defending them from any slight attack. Nature held

out to them the means of rendering it a second Gibraltar; for by building a large citadel on the top of the mountain it would have been rendered inaccessible. This mountain is so steep as to be nearly perpendicular on every side; it is formed like a tortoise, and would admit of a very extensive town. By digging wells in the rock, water would have been found in abundance; it might have contained magazines of provisions for the service of a year or more; from its height it would have been sheltered from the *ricochet* and enfilade; and, in short, would have protected so effectually the back bay, that it might have blown to atoms any fleet daring enough to cast anchor in it. Instead of adopting a plan like this, the first settlers, struck with the facility of barring the isthmus of which I have spoken, and of entrenching themselves at the foot of the mountain against the natives of the country, imagined they could do nothing better than construct in haste a front fortifica-

tion; and even in doing this they followed a defective method, then in vogue, and which was merely sufficient to defend them against the Blacks of Candy. This work, very solidly built of stone, must have cost a considerable sum of money; and when the Europeans at length became rivals in the seas of India, and had a mutual wish to dispossess each other, the dutch company, actuated by petty mercantile views, adhered to it from avarice. If they were to alter the system of defence, and establish themselves on the mountain, what had already been expended would be wholly lost; and they sacrificed every thing to so trifling a consideration. They continued, as well as they could, to meliorate their actual situation, and were far from wishing to form an expensive establishment, whilst the one in question was not only already completed, but also required, from the nature of the fortification, only very small means for its defence and support. Such

a system of economy was clear gain in the eyes of a people, who, extending their views no further than the mechanism of trade, consider details merely without looking to important results. Hence, notwithstanding all that nature had done to render it celebrated, the port of Trincomale was condemned, from the insensibility of its masters, to remain in obscurity.

When we take a view of the island of Ceylon, and reflect on the situation of the dutch establishments there, we are unable to guess for what reason they should fix their principal residence at Colombo, and why so wretched a port should have been made the capital of the island, instead of Trincomale. Is it possible they could have been induced to such a measure by the pearl-fishery in the gulf of Manar? That fishery is now so much reduced, that they might easily have judged how very defective such views would have

been. If the cultivation of sugar in that neighbourhood was their reason, they might have obtained the same advantage at Trincomale. How could they neglect to fix the centre of their power in this port, by which they might have preserved their colonies of Palliacata and Sadras, and especially that of Negapatam, which they have seen transferred to the hands of their enemies? That they have kept the two first is simply owing to their possessions, in the state to which they are reduced, having become of no consequence. Palliacata, too near Madras, has seen its commerce swallowed up by the latter, even to its beautiful manufacture of handkerchiefs; and Sadras is now nothing more than a village mouldering behind the ruins of a fortress, the ramparts of which, dislocated by mines, still exhibit their former strength. The dwellings of the interior, unroofed and stripped, have the appearance of houses destroyed by fire; a spectacle common enough in places con-

quered by the English, and to which the traveller who visits the country must accustom himself.

The fort of Trincomale not being large enough to contain all those who might have wished to settle there if the establishment had been prosperous, and scarcely affording sufficient room for the garrison, a piece of land was marked out for building a town on the outside, on the plain which separates the back bay from the harbour. But, with the exception of an extensive row of trees, used for the *bazar* or market-place of the Blacks, the town has remained imaginary; for I cannot call by that name a few gardens for the cultivation of tobacco, and three houses, with about thirty huts. This is a natural effect of the monopoly of the dutch company, which not only refused to encourage commerce themselves, but even prevented industrious men from settling in their establishments.

At the end of the war of 1778, the French had begun, in some measure, to enliven trade at Trincomale. Cinnamon was easily procured there. Now that port has nothing to offer for sale; and when I put in there, on my return, with the *United Friends*, a ship which I commanded in 1792, I could not procure the least refreshment, though I had many articles which the commandant was anxious to obtain, and though the administration was in the greatest want of opium for the Malays living there *. As the country

Malays.

* The natives of the peninsula of Malacca are in the habit of eating a great quantity of opium, of which they are very fond: the effect it produces on them is a furious drunkenness. Those who take too large a dose fall into a paroxysm of rage, from which death alone can relieve them: for this reason the government keep men in pay at Malacca, whose employment is to patrole the streets on festivals, and who are always within call, should a man intoxicated with opium appear in the streets: if any one be seen in this situation, they pursue and kill him without mercy. But for this precaution, these madmen would commit the most ter-

afforded no article of exchange, except some bad tobacco cultivated in the neigh-

rible excesses, and though the utmost activity is used, it is often impossible to prevent accidents. They are generally armed with a poniard, which they call *krist* or *krick*, the blade of which is half an inch broad and about eight inches long; it is made in a serpentine form, and leaves a wound at least two inches wide, which it is hardly practicable to probe, on account of the sinuosities occasioned by the instrument. This weapon is the more terrible from being poisoned. Its blade is always covered with grease, in which it is supposed they boil the green wood of the *mancenilier*. The effect of this poison is so sure, that it is impossible to escape; a wound made with it is certain death. They carry this krist in a wooden sheath, the blade being secured so as to avoid all friction, and preserve the poison with which it is covered, and which time, the general destroyer, seems to improve; at least the older it grows, the more rapidly it acts.

To form an idea of the rage and fury with which this opium inspires them, we should see them, in their combats on board pirate vessels, receive a lance through their bodies, and not being able to draw it out, take hold of it, and plunge it further in, to be able to get at their enemy, and stab him with their krist; a species of ferocity that obliges ships in danger of falling in with them to provide themselves with lances that have a guard through the middle of the shaft, by means of

bourhood, I could do no business. Money besides was not known among them, and they had nothing to offer me in payment but the company's notes, which I could not possibly accept.

Notwithstanding this state of penury, the establishment at the time I was there had an appearance of vigour. The king of Candy having refused to fulfil his treaty for cinnamon, and having destroyed besides from dissatisfaction a great number of trees, which were too contiguous to the dutch establishments, the company had resolved to march an army against him, and the governor-general of the island had in consequence sent a reinforcement from Co-

which they keep them off and suffer them to die at the end of the weapon, without daring to draw it out till these furious beings have breathed their last.

The Dutch, by arming them with muskets, have rendered them tolerable soldiers, and substitute them instead of Cipahis: they are stationed at almost all their establishments; and it is seldom that Trincomale is without some companies of them.

lombo. The number of white troops amounted nearly to a thousand men, which gave to the place a considerable appearance of life and activity; but as to the road, my ship was the only one to be seen at anchor there.

Independently of the fort of Trincomale, the Dutch have built another for the defence of the port. This is on a mountain; and if they had taken half the pains with the first, which they have bestowed, at clear loss, on the second, they would have succeeded in making it a place capable of resistance. This fort is called Ostembourg, from the name of the mountain on which it is built: it is simply an oval, without angles or any thing whatever to flank. The battery is intended to cover the harbour; and the situation in reality is well chosen for the purpose, and, had it been differently constructed, might have been of very great service, though, on account of its elevation, the shot thrown from it must lose

the advantage of rising again when they touch the water, and also that of raking the enemy, which is very much against it. But, by a most astonishing want of judgment in a nation known to be considerate, the only mountain not accessible is that on which they have neglected to build; while they have constructed a defective fort, at a great expense, on an eminence to which it is practicable to climb, and on which artillery may be mounted out of reach of their guns. They have not even cleared away the woods, under shelter of which it is easy to advance within ten toises of the rampart. The engineer (I humbly beg pardon for calling him so) who fortified Ostembourg seemed nevertheless to have had an idea that it might be attacked on the mountain side; for, instead of terminating his fort circularly on that side, as in every other part, he formed a strait line, which barred the whole breadth of the mountain. Had he understood what he was about, he might have reaped great advantages from its situ-

ation; in reality he should have cleared away all the wood within cannon-shot, have formed an esplanade with it, and then, throwing up entrenchments and palisading them, have opposed a regular front to an attack. It had the advantage of not being able to be turned, and of defiling the faces of the bastions, which could never have been attacked but in front. But it was never supposed that it would enter the imagination of an enemy to approach this place by land, and nothing was thought of but erecting a battery for the harbour. Mr. de Suffrein, however, proved that an attack on the side of the mountain was practicable, for it was on that side that he took it.

Whatever be the defects of this fort, it cost in the construction a great deal of money. A number of useless works were erected, and among the rest an enormous cistern; whereas, with the eighth part of the expense, a well might have been sunk in the mountain, which is only composed

of soft rough stone, and water would have been found at a very little depth, as it is met with in some places half way up the declivity.

The mountain of Ostembourg is one of those vast calcareous masses rising in this canton, between which the ocean has left passages and openings, which at present form magnificent bays and an excellent harbour. It is of an oblong form, steep at one extremity, and at the other gradually sloping off towards the plain; it projects into the grand bason which forms the harbour, and divides it into two parts, Nicholson-bay being on one side, and Ostembourg-road on the other.

The passage for entering the harbour is towards the steep extremity, at the foot of which, near the edge of the water, is erected a raking battery, which would have an excellent effect if it could be sheltered from the splinters which the enemy's shot would sever from the mountain. This

battery however, the fort of Ostembourg, and that of Trincomale, having no communication with each other, and no intermediate posts, can render no mutual support; they are besides without defiles into the interior of the country, by which to obtain subsistence after the enemy has made good his landing. They stand therefore isolated and apart, and must defend themselves separately as well as they can.

The harbour of Trincomale is certainly very superb; and to judge of it from the accounts that have been given, it would seem to require nothing to render it perfect; there are, however, inconveniences belonging to it which it is proper should be made known.

The principal bay is immense; but it has no anchorage, and is scarcely navigable. To enter the port, a ship must work across it; which is in some measure dangerous, as there are many rocks, some of which are

eight or ten feet only below the surface of the water, which renders it necessary to have a pilot; to obtain whom you first come to anchor in what is called the Back-bay, under the fort of Trincomale, where there is very good ground. Of all the creeks and bays of the establishments, this would be the best, if there was any shelter in the bad season during the north-east monsoon; but it is then not tenable, and you must get into port.

During the south-west monsoon it is the only place frequented by ships, because there is anchorage on each tack; and when they wish to depart, they may be out at sea in an instant without difficulty. Nevertheless, as this little bay is not sheltered, there is always a great swell in it, which makes the vessels roll, and renders it impossible to careen them.

The inner part of the great bay affords an anchorage near the river Cotiar; but there is this inconvenience attending it, that fre-

quently, during the south-west monsoon, a vessel may beat a whole day without getting in so far: in which case, as there is no anchorage any where else, it is obliged to return to the Back-bay to recommence on the morrow its attempts. An equal difficulty is found during the north-east monsoon in getting out; and this is the more to be dreaded, as, after a whole day spent in the attempt, night may bring on a storm, and expose the vessel to the danger of perishing on the coast, from which it may not have been able to make a sufficient offing.

When we have succeeded in getting to the further end of the bay, we put about for the harbour, and come to anchor at Ostembourg-point. The shore of that mountain is so bold, that a boat run aground at the head will have fourteen fathom water at the rudder: at half a cable's length there will be thirty-three fathom.

This bason is very improperly called the harbour: it is rather an immense bay, where ships are moored across, and where there is a heavy swell, though it is land-locked on every side; but the bay is so extensive, that the leeward side is always very much agitated. The middle of the bay has a soft clay bottom, in which anchors sink so deep as to render it impossible to recover them. Further on, towards the inmost part of the harbour, is a rock of no small extent; but the bay is so large and so little frequented, that there is more than sufficient room for such vessels as wish to enter it. The inconvenience of not being able to get in without beating to windward must be extremely disagreeable to a vessel in any kind of distress. Should she be leaky, with only a few hands, exhausted by fatigue, the inconvenience must be considerably increased by being obliged to spend a day or more in tacking to arrive at the careening-place; and if the rigging be bad, this becomes impossible: she must

then of necessity bring up in a great depth of water in the Back-bay, till assistance arrives, by which she may be enabled to enter the harbour; which must greatly retard her operations.

There is the same disadvantage for a ship of war after an engagement. If totally dismasted, it is impossible for her to get in under jury-masts; and if the hull also be impaired, she cannot obtain the smallest relief; for in the Back-bay, the only place where she could be moored, there would be no possibility of her refitting. In addition to these inconveniences the vastness of the harbour must be considered. During the south-west monsoon vessels are careened at the greater island; but if a breeze spring up in the offing or in the north-east, their position must be instantly altered, for the sea swells so suddenly, that they would be in considerable danger. During the other monsoon the careening is done in Nicholson's-bay, but that is no better sheltered; and in *l'Anse*

des Cours, where there is also anchorage, there is the same disadvantage. These different places, besides, are above three miles distant from each other, and six from the fort of Trincomale. How difficult, or at least expensive, it would be, provided they could mutually assist one another, to form establishments in each, may easily be conceived. Some miserable storehouses, indeed, have been constructed at the foot of the mountain of Ostembourg, and, supposing an establishment were formed there, sufficient for the operations of a considerable port, the difficulty would remain to find a place where ships might be built and launched. For the rest, the principal disadvantage of this port is the want of good water: except a small spring at the foot of the mountain of Ostembourg, towards Nicholson's-bay, there is none scarcely to be found. The other springs afford but little, and are drained by the natives. During the war of 1778 we were obliged to supply ourselves from the river Cotiar, which is nine miles

distant, as all the wells about Trincomale were brackish and unwholesome. Notwithstanding all this, the harbour is an inestimable benefit; for there is no other in this part of India, and the possession of it is of the highest importance.

The environs of Trincomale are uncultivated. About fifteen miles from the fort is a fountain of warm water. It jets out in two places. One of the sources is too hot to be borne; the other is of a moderate heat; and twenty feet from the latter rises a spring of cold water.

The woods with which this country is covered are near the town. It would be imprudent to enter them unarmed, as they abound in buffaloes, elephants, and tigers, to which Buffon gives the name of *ounce*: there are also a great number of monkeys there. The river Cotiar is near a lake, where the wild elephants frequently resort to bathe. Our sailors often had skirmishes with them.

The southern coast of the great bay is terminated by Sale-point; it abounds in peacocks and quails, but there is very little shooting, on account of the wild beasts, which there is danger of falling in with. Mr. Sonnerat found there what is called the primitive cock, and which Buffon maintains to be the golden pheasant. I saw one of them in Mr. Casenove's garden at Pondicherry. Mr. Sonnerat shewed me another stuffed, a most beautiful bird, the feathers of which were all covered with gold-coloured spots. He has given a description of it that is accurate, to which the reader may refer.

On a small rock called the Chapel are oysters, and it is the only place where they are to be found. Cattle are so scarce at Trincomale, that a small piece of beef is a dish of the greatest value. While the French were masters of it, they introduced a species of goats, called maroon dogs, which at that time formed the chief supply of the kitchen. But these

flocks are insensibly exhausted; and when I returned there, nothing was to be had but fish and cheese. The commandant having done me the honour of inviting me to dinner, gave me nothing else, and for drink all he had to offer his guests was grog made of arrack and water. At the dessert indeed there were served up, as a dainty, a bottle of brandy and another of gin, accompanied with the same demonstrations as are used at Paris in offering a glass of hermitage or tokay. In a word, such was the misery of the country, that even a candle was a luxury, and there was nothing but oil of cocoa to substitute in its stead.

Ceylon may in a manner be considered as the country of cocoa-nuts, the island being almost covered with the trees: it also produces very excellent rice, and towards the southern part, in the neighbourhood of *Punto Gallo* and Colombo, the Dutch cultivate sugar. These three articles together produce a considerable

trade; they serve to make arrack, of which a great quantity is exported to different parts of India, and cocoa-hair, which is used in forming cables for ships.

The manners of this canton being nearly the same as those of the coast of India, I shall pass on to Pondicherry, taking a slight glance at the village of Karikal.

Karikal.

This possession is a small aldée to the south of the danish settlement at Trinkebar. The French government keeps a military commandant there, with a detachment of troops of colour. Its principal product is *nely*, a name given to rice when it is simply threshed, without being disengaged from its outer skin. This nely serves for the consumption of Pondicherry. The establishment of Karikal, in common with other parts of the coast, makes salt, which the French carry to Bengal. The government of Pondicherry gives *bons*, or permits, every year, to transport it into that province, to the

amount, in quantity, of eight hundred thousand maunds, or sixty millions weight: it must be delivered to the english company, who engage to take it at a certain price before agreed on, and pay in ready money: if any be sent without such permit, it is confiscated; or if more than eight hundred thousand maunds, the quantity stipulated by the contract, be sent, it is also seized: any persons attempting to introduce salt into Bengal, and selling it to the natives, are punished as defrauders. These permits form a part of the riches of the french government, in addition to its territorial revenue. A portion of them is set apart for the support of widows, orphans, and the poor. The rest are sold to individuals, and the produce goes into the coffers of government.

From the southern point of the coast of Coromandel to the Palm-tree Point, which terminates the bay of Balassore, it is impossible to make good a landing in european boats. The ocean, which, for a Bar.

long continuity of ages has successively retired, both from the mountains of the Gauts, and the plain on which they are elevated, is daily raising the coast, which it insensibly abandons; it is continually amassing sand and wrecks of marine productions over its whole extent, of which it gradually forms a bank, destined at some future day to become the coast, against which it will again throw up other banks. These sands form what is called the bar; against which the sea is almost constantly beating with great fury. The extremities of the waves which pass over the bank lodge between it and the shore, where they form new waves. The alternate movement of the surge, which tends to undermine the shore, and the retrograde movement of these waves, seeking to reunite themselves with the mass of the sea, occasion an excavation between the bank and the coast. This space, about pistol-shot wide, makes what is called the *ressac* of the bar. As it is only the top of the wave which passes over the bank forming

the bar, the depth of water is not more than a foot, and is often less. The surge sometimes rises considerably above it, and breaks with violence. An european boat, attempting this passage, would run the risk of touching on the bank, and of being swallowed up by the waves. To prevent this, flat-bottomed boats, called *chelingues*, are constructed, without beams, and which have the planks sewed together, instead of being nailed. This formation gives them more elasticity, allows them to bend when they are struck by the surge, and prevents them from being so easily stove as other boats: they are so flat, that they do not draw when loaded above six inches water, and some not even so much; they are extremely high at the sides, seldom less than four feet, so that when the surf overtakes them, as it cannot reach over the side, they are in less danger of being filled. They are generally manned with nine Blacks, and when the sea runs high with eleven. The person who steers stands up abaft, and is furnished

Chelingues.

with an extremely large oar, with which he endeavours to keep the end of the boat always towards the wave. Long experience points out to them that all waves are not of equal strength, and that after three heavy ones there will at least succeed one less violent. They watch their opportunity and are seldom deceived. Floating along on that which they deem to be the most manageable, they follow it up, with the foam constantly a-head of their chelingue. The rest of the wave, still swelling, affords them sufficient water to clear the bank, and they arrive thus in perfect safety, pursued by another wave, which breaks behind them upon the bar, but, unable to overtake them, is no impediment to their attaining the landing-place. Great, however, as their skill may be, they do not always succeed; sometimes they are deceived in the swell, or they steer badly, or else are not in good trim; and they are then surprised by the surf, upset, and every thing contained in the chelingue is tumbled into the sea. As

they are all excellent swimmers, they lay hold of the Europeans, and save them, but the goods are in danger of being lost.

To guard against a misfortune like this, when large sums of money are confided to them, or other articles of value, they tie a rope to them, and fix at the end of it a buoy, by which they know where the effects are, and are able to recover them.

When the sea runs so high that they are apprehensive of an accident, they add to these precautions that of providing a *catimaron* to accompany their chelingue. Catimaron.
This is a bundle of three pieces of wood tied together with cords. Their width prevents them from upsetting, and, as they have no interior capaciousness, they cannot sink. The Blacks seat themselves on this sort of raft, with their legs bent under them, sometimes relieving themselves from so tiresome an attitude by letting

them hang over in the water. There have been instances of sharks carrying off some of these men from the reef when in their general attitude, whether on their knees or sitting down; the sea washes them to the middle of their bodies; the only dry part is the head, on which therefore they carry the papers that are confided to them, in a cap made for the purpose.

On vessels of this frail description the natives of India, and particularly the islanders of the Andamans and the Straits, undertake long voyages. They put a mast to this wretched catimaron, and fix to it a weight, which serves to counterbalance an enormous sail, and prevent their upsetting; thus equipped, they make way with astonishing celerity. If any accident happens, they have recourse to swimming, and, like so many fishes, as if the element was natural to them, put their machine to rights, on which they seat themselves again, and continue their voyage.

When we arrive on the coast of India, the first objects we discern are the flags of the town we approach: they are seen floating on the sea, as though they had emerged from its bosom. The coast is low, that it is not perceptible till we are near it, the mountains being too distant from the shore to be seen out at sea. Low coast.

This plain, which extends from the borders of the sea to the Gauts, is so flat, that the rivers have scarcely any current, and even at their mouths are so little rapid, that the sea throws up a bar in the same manner as in other parts; thus closing the rivers, and leaving the water to filter through the sand. In the rainy seasons they swell, rise above the bank by which they are closed, and open for themselves a passage, which the sea again fills up as soon as the body of water is run off. I speak, as may be supposed, of small rivers only, and not of those which are deep enough to admit ships. Conjectures on the antiquity of the present coast.

This want of elevation in the coast but ill agrees with the supposed antiquity of the country. The number of rivers, the lakes by which they are supplied, the soil, that in many places is nothing but sand, all seem to indicate, that, at no very remote period, it was covered by the ocean. Not the least elevation can be discovered till we arrive at Pondicherry, and thence, to the north of Sadras, only a few hills are perceptible, which must have been islands when the ocean covered the plain.

If we consider the shallowness of the gulph which separates Ceylon from the coast, and the chain of rocks that re-unites them, over which nothing but pirogues can now pass, we may venture to affirm, without temerity, that in the course of twelve centuries, Ceylon will be no longer an island, allowing to this part of the world the same progressive diminution as we have observed in the Baltic, namely, forty-five inches to a century. The calculation would be just; for there is only

nine fathom water in the deepest part of the gulph. By admitting a similar anterior diminution in the ocean, it would follow, that India is not now as it was in the time of Alexander, and that the plain on which Pondicherry and Madras are built was then under water.

There are monuments of men existing in this country, however, which bear marks of great antiquity. I here anticipate my excursion, in order to present facts at variance with the system, that a juster opinion may be formed.

Monument of Datcharom.

In ascending the Godwarin, about nine miles above Yanaon, we meet with a small indian town called Cota, the residence of a raja. Hence directing our course a little to the eastward, we arrive at a considerable moorish aldée named Datcharom. The situation of this place is not elevated; on the contrary it is surrounded with water, and consequently could not have been freed from the empire of the ocean till

some ages after the present coast: yet in this aldée we find a very beautiful pagoda, which must formerly have been a strong place; it is defended by a wide and deep ditch, the degraded sides of which, notwithstanding their slope, exhibit proofs of antiquity. We arrive at the edifice by two bridges. The pagoda, like all others, is built in the centre of a vast court, the circuit of which struck me with astonishment. The wall is so ancient, that it has three times undergone a thorough repair; the difference of the mason work cannot escape the eye of an attentive and experienced observer; as a necessary consequence of the injuries of time, it has now fallen into ruins. The two upper parts of the masonry have nothing remarkable in them but their antique appearance; they are composed of brick. That which supports them is also of brick, but in better condition; and the malabar style is discernable in two mouldings which time has spared: the whole rests on a foundation of granite of the greatest beauty,

of which the level has not given way a single inch. All the foundation of the western front, as well as that of the southern, is completely preserved; the architecture is visibly greek, for the plinth, the swell above it, and the astragal, are as corectly displayed as if done by an architect of the present day; the whole is completely laid out by line, and calculated to engage the attention of a spectator. When we compare this monument with the pagodas of Chalambarum and Jagrenaut, both constructed in the malabar taste, and passing for antiquities, it is difficult to account for a piece of greek architecture thus appearing in the midst of a country where no other trace of it is to be found, except in european establishments, and there even no work of granite of this kind exists. I have seen in this country many *chauderies* and other buildings constructed of a similar stone, but they were all of the malabar or indian architecture, without the smallest greek vestige presenting itself. The Moors of Datcharom have the

highest idea of the antiquity of this pagoda; it existed, they say, long before they settled on this spot, and they have suffered it to remain for the use of the Hindoos living with them in the village. Their tradition informs them of the erection of the two superior pieces of masonry; but they are ignorant of the date of the third, and have no idea of the age of the foundation on which the whole stands.

Whoever was the architect that built this monument, he must have taken every possible precaution to do it with solidity, considering that he had to work in the midst of water; and he succeeded, for the building has remained to this day. It is fair to presume, that it was erected in times anterior to indian architecture, as it would otherwise have been conformable to the manner of the country. At the time of the first repair the malabar architecture was known, for it is done in the indian style.

Conjectures on the antiquity of the present coast.

If this was a Greek edifice, as it appears to be, how are we to reconcile the remote period of its foundation with the recent one, when the sea is supposed to have quitted these shores? The country in general is so low, that a tempest is sufficient to lay it under water; and instances of it are not wanting. In the year 1789 all the country of Coringui and the neighbouring parts were deluged by three waves, which a storm raised above the common level: the water reached even as far as Yanaon. The sea rose above its ordinary limits, and carried a vessel * into the plains within three miles of Coringui. When these three waves had spent their force, the sea returned to its bed, and the waters ran off. An event like this proves beyond dispute the trifling elevation of the country, and consequently its late existence: how then can it happen, that at Datcharom, in the neighbourhood of Coringui, a monument should be found

* *The Greyhound*, captain Bourdé Delavillaubert.

bearing every mark of the remotest antiquity?

Conjectures on tthe mounains.

If we admit with some geographers, that in the early ages of the world the peninsula of India was an island, which I am far from denying, it must follow, that the plain, extending from the sea-coast to the foot of the Gauts, was still under water at that epoch, as it is much lower than the country which formed the strait between the then island and what at the present day forms the Mogul, properly so called. On this hypothesis would not the Gauts have been the cradle of the Bramins? It appears to me that the affirmative is probable. These mountains must have existed from the first ages of the world: they are primitive, that is to say, granitic: they incontestably form one of the ramifications of the chain which constitutes, so to speak, the timber-work of the earth: they would seem to end at Cape Comorin. But I am not afraid of being taxed with exaggeration by those who have made this

part of the globe their study, when I affirm, that to me they do not appear to terminate till they reach the island of St. Paul to the southward of the Mauritius and the Isle of Bourbon; and the only reason why we do not see them rise again between the island of St. Paul and the Pole, is, that the ice has prevented us from penetrating so far, or that the mountains which continue this chain are not sufficiently elevated to appear above the surface of the sea. It is this same chain which, plunging under the waves, re-appears at intervals, and shows the peaks of its mountains, of which the summits form the isles of France, Bourbon, Rodrigues, and the vast archipelago, hitherto so little explored, which covers the sea between those islands and the Maldives. The Maldives, the Laccadives, and even Ceylon, are also a continuation of this chain: of Ceylon, however, I speak from conjecture only, as I have not observed it. The mountains of the coast which I have visited are all calcareous; but I conceive that the middle

chain of the island is granitic. In short, if we admit the principle, now considered as indisputable, of the successive retreat of the ocean, we must necessarily infer, that in the course of a considerable number of ages the Mauritius and the Isle of Bourbon will terminate Asia to the southward.

This opinion is very far from being hypothetical. These two islands are already nearly joined to the continent. Their archipelago and that of the Maldives are nothing more than a continued mass of mountains connected together under the water at no great depth, between which the sea still preserves its channels. In a word, to the eye of a philosopher this continent is already exposed to view: the plains alone remain submerged; and even these perhaps wait only for the epoch, when the slow and gradual retreat of the fluid element shall leave them dry, to rise from the bosom of the ocean; or they may be indebted for their existence to some vol-

canic explosion. So great a space cannot be entirely without pyrites: the isle of Bourbon burns already; and it is to be presumed, that the water, effecting at last a passage to those contained in the bowels of the earth that still supports the yoke of the ocean, some explosion will result, and produce either the wreck of the existing islands or the formation of new countries: we ought rather to incline to the latter hypothesis, as the existing mountains form together such a mass of granite, that the explosion would more easily throw up the bottom of the sea to its surface, than shake and swallow up so great a body, the resistance of which is augmented by its adhesion to what is near it, and by the union of all the parts of which it is constituted.

But to return to my voyage.

Description of Pondicherry.

On arriving before Pondicherry the eye is shocked with the ruins that present themselves. The church and the capuchin convent, destroyed during the siege

of Mr. de Bellecombe, have not been repaired; many other houses on the sea-shore, to the eastward, in like manner destroyed, are a heap of ruins; and the whole exhibits a mournful and sickening spectacle. But when we are landed the scene changes. As we enter the place of arms we are struck with its grandeur; the governor's palace adds to its beauty, and gives it a noble appearance; and if every thing corresponded with this beginning, Pondicherry would be the finest town in India.

It is divided into two parts, the Black Town and the White Town: the latter spreads along the sea-coast, and is again divided into two parts, the north and south. The tower bearing the flag-staff is in the middle, and separates the two quarters.

The Black Town is separated from the White by a ditch running through the whole extent of Pondicherry. It reaches to the ramparts, and contains a popula-

tion of nearly eighty thousand souls, and a cathedral belonging to a convent of french jesuits, the bishop of which belongs to that society. This church, newly built in the modern taste, is the only one in India that is tolerable.

The White Town is very inconsiderable. Its length comprehends the whole front of the place on the sea-shore; but its width from the shore to the ditch, which separates it from the Black Town, is not more than three hundred toises. This space is filled with handsome houses, but few of them are more than one story high: it contains a parish-church, the duty of which is done by the capuchins of the french mission.

The streets, as in every other part of India, are without pavement, and are most of them nothing but sand. As the houses are all white-washed, it is extremely disagreeable to walk there during

the heat of the day, on account of the reverberation. To remedy this inconvenience, it is customary to be carried; and the pay of servants is so little, that almost every person has the means of hiring a palanquin and carriers. So many travellers have written on this subject, that I shall not enter into particulars: the reader may consult Sonnerat, Niebuhr, and others. The short details I shall give are those of which the authors who have preceded me have not deigned to speak.

A captain or traveller finds, immediately on landing, if he has money, every thing necessary for his accommodation in the country, without any other trouble than that of choosing. This is all comprised in the person of a dobachi. The crowd of these people is prodigious: they are followed by a number of boys, and form a rabble which it is difficult to get rid of. The moment you land from the chelingue they beset you on all sides. Some seize upon your lug-

gage, others present you with certificates of faithful services to captains or individuals in private situations who have employed them, and each seems to claim a right to the possession of the new-comer, to the exclusion of the rest: those who have the articles of luggage make a parade of them, and range themselves near the stranger with an air of satisfaction. If he seems to distinguish any one in particular, a dispute instantly takes place, and an uproar is raised, which the beating of the sea against the bar tends to augment. A traveller, landing on the coast of India for the first time, is at a loss how to act. At every step he takes, to proceed towards the town, an hundred arms are stretched forth with certificates to oblige him to choose. In proportion as his embarrassment increases, the Blacks, who perceive he is a novice, become importunate: at length, quite tired out, he makes a choice, and instantly the mob disperse. The dobachi chosen is generally the first domestic of a

Dobachi and domestics.

rich man: sent by his master, he immediately falls upon the multitude with his cane, seizes, in the most brutal manner, on the effects which the traveller has landed, places some subaltern servants to clear the way through the crowd, brings the stranger to a palanquin, and takes him off as his prey to any inn he may think proper. The dobachi in chief then comes to pay his respects; and, in the course of the day, the new comer is furnished with a house, goods, servants of every description, and a well-supplied kitchen; in a word, every thing is provided without giving him the trouble even to express a wish; for often he is ignorant of the customs to which it is necessary to conform. The dobachi takes possession of the money, merchandise, and every thing belonging to his master's affairs: the former is put into the hands of a cashier called a *seraff*. The profit which the dobachi derives from this money enables him to defray his master's expenses: it is also

customary, if you do a great deal of business, for him to make all payments during your stay in the country.

There are servants for every purpose. The four principal casts of India are subdivided into many small ones; and these different sub-divisions are governed by prejudices that will not permit them to engage alike in ignoble occupations. All their services have different shades; Servants. and the gradation of those who have to perform them is very distinct. The lowest casts are the scavengers and the sweepers, called *taligarchi*. The shoemakers follow next, and are extremely abased by opinion; then the domestics, placed near the master for his personal wants, such as washing his feet and buckling his shoes, the carriers, and those who hold the parasol; and next the barber, the nose and ear cleaner, and the nail-cutter. These people refine on every thing capable of producing agreeable sensations. I never found any thing more pleasant

than having my ears cleaned by a Black of Pondicherry: they finish the operation by introducing a small piece of steel, which they cause to vibrate by a gentle movement of the fingers, the sonorous noise occasioned by which produces a delicious tremor. After this servant comes the hair-dresser, then the *masser*. Massing is also a sensation which these people know how to produce.

After living some time in the climate of India, we are exhausted by perspiration; the great heat occasions lassitude, we are scarcely able to move about, the humours have no circulation, and the blood becomes thick; we feel heavy, are oppressed with an inclination to sleep, and fall into a state of apathy, which terminates in some malady, and often in ulcers. The baths are not always sufficient to restore the benumbed fibres to their wonted tone: but all these accidents are prevented by undergoing the operation of massing. We accustom ourselves to it by

degrees, beginning gently at first: but after five or six months it is used more vigorously. The person on whom the operation is performed lies on a bed; a servant kneads him all over like a piece of soft dough, taking care to dwell particularly on the muscles of the arms, legs, &c.

The use of this ceremony is to make the blood and humours circulate freely; it produces an agreeable sleep; after which we rise active and nimble, without inconvenience, pain, numbness, or head-ach.

Next to the masser comes the *valet-de-chambre*, and then the person who has the care of the clothes, linen, &c. When a valet-de-chambre gives his master a shirt, the writer gravely sets it down in the account, shuts the trunk, takes the key of it with great importance, and adds it to a bunch which he proudly carries on one shoulder: the larger is the size of

this bunch of keys, of so much the greater importance does the servant think himself.

After him comes the *hreka-berdar*, who prepares the hooka, and presents it to his master when he wishes to smoke. A description of this instrument has been given in the works of almost all travellers in this country. The grand merit of an hookabredar is to assist his master when he smokes in his palanquin or on horse-back; for which purpose he must carry the bottle and a chafing-dish, while his master holds the end of the serpentine tube. In this manner he keeps up with the bearers of the palanquin, or the horse, without the least inconvenience: the fire, the tobacco, the water, are all carried with so much precaution, that a person smokes as commodiously as in an apartment.

After the hooka-bearer comes the *pion* or soldier. This personage is of the moorish cast, and is sometimes valiant, often quarrelsome, and always proud of

his post. He wears a bandoleer or shoulder-belt, with a plate of silver, on which are engraved the arms or ciphers of the person in whose service he is. His employment is to execute little commissions, and accompany his master when he goes out; he is armed either with a sabre or pike, and runs before the palanquin, driving away the crowd, and crying incessantly, in the moorish tongue, to clear the road. The number of pions is increased according to the luxury intended to be displayed. A tradesman has usually two; while those who in any way belong to government have four or five. A tradesman, borne rapidly along in his palanquin, preceded by his pions and four carriers in relay, accompanied by his hooka-bredar and umbrella-holder, followed by waiters and writers who never quit him, making a great noise and upsetting the crowd on their passage, has no longer the appearance, in the eyes of a new comer, of a person in this station of

life, but would be rather taken for some rich and powerful nobleman.

The next most important personage is the porter. This man thinks himself invested with a great charge: it is true he guards the door with so scrupulous an attention, that he frequently stops the servants of the house when they are going out with a parcel, unless they give him the countersign to let them pass.

To these must be added the cook and his assistants; the *compradore*, whose business is to purchase provisions; the butler and steward, and the person who waits at table, which complete the crowd of domestics attached to the immediate service of a man moderately rich.

After a host like this one would imagine the list must be finished: but no; there are besides, the dobachi in chief, and three or four upper servants, as many

subaltern writers, and a multitude of young Indians belonging to him, to learn the trade, and who form together a very considerable retinue. The dobachi enters alone into the chamber or closet of the master, followed by a writer to take orders, make notes, or present accounts. As this man has the management of every thing, an european merchant has only to inspect his proceedings and make known his wishes. This little morning audience over, he is dismissed, and the house remains crowded with his suite: they take possession of every corner, and, sitting on the ground, are employed in writing, observing all the while so profound a silence, that the master, to be heard, has only to clap his hands softly in his apartment, and instantly the whole troop is in motion. In paying a morning-visit, it becomes a study how to be able to make way in the anti-chamber, or hall, through the midst of all these writers, surrounded with their papers, without treading some of them under foot. The In-

dians begin to write on silk paper, which they procure from China. In general, it sucks up a great deal of ink: but they have not yet adopted the custom of making their books of this paper. They commonly write on the fan-palm leaf, using for the purpose an iron bodkin, which they move with the right hand, and conduct with the thumb-nail of the left, holding the leaf in the hand without resting it. When they wish to make a book, they cut a number of leaves of the same length, make holes in them at each end, and file them: to the cords two thin boards, wider and longer than the leaves, are fastened, and which serve to preserve them. They shut the book, and fasten it by drawing the cords tight: there are books of this kind extremely voluminous. (*See* Sonnerat.)

Books.

The Moors and Malabars have different characters. The moorish language is derived from the persian, of which it has taken the alphabet. This language is much

used in every part of Asia, China excepted. The soldiers and sailors all speak it.

The malabar language is that of the country; it has its particular characters. The study of it is by no means disagreeable; and it has literary works numerous enough to afford any one, who is desirous of instructing himself, sufficient reading. Language.

But again, for every thing relating to the languages, customs, and religion of India, I refer to Sonnerat. It is difficult after this author to say any thing new. All that can be done is to indicate the facts, in order to put the reader in the right road.

I shall not treat of the different casts, that object being so well known as to render it unnecessary; but to those with which we are acquainted, there is a new one to be added, that increases considerably, and perhaps will end one day in over-running all the rest, the Bramins excepted. Casts.

This is the cast produced by the alliance of Europeans with the natives of every other cast. The first unions of this kind were formed by the Portuguese at the time of their brilliant conquests. The race has taken their name, and is known by it. This portuguese filiation has not always continued white; some branches are again become black, while others have so nearly approached the european complexion, as at first sight not to be known; which is the less surprising, as the Indians, with the exception of colour, have nothing in their features to distinguish them from Europeans. I shall take this opportunity to say a few words on the different people I have seen on the globe.

All men are indisputably of one species, as they can all procreate together; but the races are visibly different. I have observed four distinct ones, which subdivide into several branches. The first race is that of Europe and Asia: it appears to

be demonstrated that the origin is the same, whatever be the colour which varies it.

This colour becomes deeper in proportion as it approaches the equator, which to me is a proof, that it is owing to the climate. I will admit the black net-work found by anatomists between the skin and the epidermis of a negro; I will even admit, that the same particularity is also met with in a Black of Asia, that is, in an Indian of the low cast; for it cannot belong to the race of the Bramins, whose colour is a pale yellow, a little less dark than that of the Mulattoes, and of a fresher hue.

But even allowing, that this net-work is found in an Indian, I should not the less be inclined to conclude, that the climate had alone produced it, and that by a higher latitude it would be dispersed in a few generations, even without intercourse with the whites. The Blacks, moreover, I mean those that are absolutely so,

are not very numerous in Asia. Few are found except in the peninsula of India, at Pegu, and in the islands; for as soon as we reach the latitude of twenty degrees, the species begins to assume a clearer teint. In other respects, the features are the same as ours. The leading ones are moderately thick lips, protuberant nose, long eyes, soft long hair, and a beard.

This race in Europe takes three very distinct shades, that of the east, that of the west, and the Laplanders. The first have preserved something of the greek countenance, which is not so much altered but it may be recognised. In Asia, the principal shades are those of the Whites, the Bramins and the copper-coloured, the Blacks and the Chinese. The most striking features of the latter are, the nose less protuberant, the eyes small and placed obliquely. All these subdivisions are, in my opinion, of one common origin; the climate alone has imprinted on them the difference by which they are characterised.

The second race is that of Africa. This is perfectly distinct, and must have had a different origin. Its principal characters are generally a black complexion without polish, the nose flat and broad, with little projection, round eyes, thick lips, and curling woolly hair and beard. There has been only one sub-division of this race hitherto discovered, which is that of the Hottentots, who are of a colour less deep, and who have individuals among them inclining in some degree to a copper-colour; but in other respects the characteristics are the same. The curly wool, in particular, appears to be the principal attribute of the african race. A celebrated writer of our own time has asserted, that the cradle of the human race was in the flat part of Tartary. I shall not contest this origin of the Europeans and Asiatics, for I am persuaded they have sprung from a common stock; but I cannot so readily believe, that Africa owes its population to the same source. The Isthmus of Suez has visibly served as a bed for the

sea, in times when Africa could not have been unpeopled. That great island must have had a race peculiar to itself in ages when navigation was too little known for us to suppose, that men could have been dispersed over the globe by means of their ships. We will admit, with some authors, that the primitive inhabitants were enabled to descend from Caucasus, and spread themselves over the plains in proportion as they were left dry. But we have no reason to refuse a similar means of population to Africa, who might also have had her Caucasus, whence the source of the african race derived its birth. We are not sufficiently acquainted with that part of the world to form solid conjectures respecting it, but are obliged to confine our observations to the race of men that inhabit it. This race is certainly different from ours. The origin cannot possibly be the same; to prove it so, it would be necessary that an african family, transported into Europe, should assume, without mixing with the race of Europe,

european features, that the hair should become straight, &c.; and so of a european family transported into Africa.

We do not find, however, that the hair of the Creoles of the Cape of Good Hope, whose families have lived three or four generations in the country, becomes changed into wool. This wool is so strongly impressed on the african race, that even when they intermix with Europeans, it is the last characteristic that disappears. It clings so closely to the race, it distinguishes them so perfectly from all others, that even in thirty-four degrees of latitude it loses nothing of its force; it is still the same wool. This peculiarity so completely belongs to Africa, that it confines itself within her limits, and does not pass beyond them. The Spaniards, separated by a strait of only one-and-twenty miles, have long shining hair. The Arabs too, who border on Africa, who are merely divided by the straits of Babel-mandel, have in like manner all long

hair. When the marks are so distinct, how is it possible not to acknowledge that the origin is different *?

* I know that Mr. Bruce says, Vol. I. page 172, that the Kennoufs, a people inhabiting the banks of the Nile, beyond the second cataract of Nubia, have hair, not wool; but he did not inquire, whether the colony is indigenous, or whether it came from Asia. All the country, as we know, is over-run with Arabs; and there is no reason for refusing to believe that the Kennoufs are of arabian origin; so that this fact, which the author's reputation does not permit us to doubt, proves nothing against our system.

The same traveller assures us, page 342, that the inhabitants to the southward of Cape Heli, between Yemen and the states of the scherif of Mecca, have wool instead of hair. This also does not subvert what I have advanced: to overcome my opinion, individuals with woolly hair must be found all over the earth, intermingled with others that have long hair; but while I see them confined to a small distinct colony, I consider the circumstance as a new proof in my favor, and infer, that they have a different origin from the inhabitants of the country in the midst of whom they are encompassed. On the coast of Arabia we meet with Abyssinians at every step. Is the inestimable author I have mentioned sure, that the canton of Cape Heli may not have given an asylum to [illegible] emigration from Abyssinia, either during the wars for the establishment

The third race is principally found towards Darien, but its individuals are much less numerous. These are the Albinos, who are chiefly distinguished by the dead whiteness on their skin, by flax instead of hair on their heads, and by little round eyes incapable of supporting the light of day.

It would not be easy to decide on the origin of these miserable beings, to whom nature has refused so much. She has endowed them, it is true, with the faculty of thinking and speaking; but the latter quality is so imperfect among them, that it rather resembles a murmur than an articulation: even at a short distance the

of Mahometanism,* or before that period? His observations, though generally admirable, require perhaps sometimes to be examined closely; for it is possible he may have relied on a bad compiler, for the care of putting his notes in order. Ought we not, for instance, to place in the rank of doubtful observations that which leads him to give 24° 45″ north as the latitude of Syenne, which is close to the spot where Pliny and Strabo say the well was dug directly under the tropic?

movement of their lips is all that can be perceived: no sound reaches the ear, unless we are near enough to touch them.

As to their faculty of thinking, if we may judge from their indolent mode of life, resulting perhaps from a sense of their weakness, it is by no means profound: indeed, reflecting on such actions of theirs with which we are acquainted, we are forced to admit, that they have no more reason than is barely sufficient to enable them to avoid what is injurious.

This unhappy race, weak and defenceless, no longer consists but of a few scattered individuals, escaped from wild beasts and men, by whom they have been hunted. Some of them have arrived among us; and, if we were rash enough to form a judgment of nature by such specimens, we must suppose, that she had only thrown a few of this race vaguely on the globe, without permitting them to form a colony of their own: at least, the utmost endea-

vours of travellers have never been able to discover one. A few of these wretched beings, of both sexes, have been met with on the coast, where they appeared to live on fish, and have been supposed, unjustly perhaps, to possess scarcely more intellect than the oysters which they tear from the rocks.

If this race of men was ever numerous, it has almost entirely disappeared; for there now exists no more instances than is just sufficient to preserve the remembrance of it: it is, besides, too little known for it to be determined, whether it has any subdivisions, or even for us to say any thing positive respecting it.

It has been imagined, that the physical and moral state of these beings was occasioned by sickness; some have even thought, that it was the appearance of the disorder itself: but these are merely conjectures; and we ought to consider them as a distinct race, till we have acquired in-

formation that may do away all doubt on the subject.

The fourth race is that of America. A people, spreading under a sky so varied as to comprehend all the zones, must be supposed to have numerous sub-divisions; and in reality they extend almost to infinity: but, with the exception of a few hordes of savages to the northward, they are principally distinguished by having no beard.

This mark is as striking and indelible as the wool of the Africans; and it appears to me as incontestably to prove, that their origin is different from ours.

The newness of this continent does not seem to me an undeniable proof, that its inhabitants came from what is called the old world: the plains alone have the appearance of being recently freed from the waters of the ocean; but there is nothing to induce us to believe, that the mountains should have been submerged when ours

were dry. If the Pichincha and the Chimborazo bear evident marks of the residence of the ocean on their most elevated peaks, our Alps present the same testimonials; and to me it seems reasonable to believe, that the mountains of America were the secret residence of the first individuals of the American race; as Caucasus, perhaps Atlas, and other mountains, have been the birth-place of the different races which now people Europe and Africa. In a word, the hair and beard are, in my opinion, marks by which Nature has separated the three grand divisions of the inhabitants of the earth (for the Albinos are so few in number, that I can hardly consider them with the others); the livery which she has ordained them to wear is not to be effaced; it has subsisted from their origin, and will be an eternal monument to attest the difference of the sources whence they have derived their existence.

From the system of which I have drawn

the outlines, it is not surprising that the portuguese race, by intermarriages, should be so perfectly assimilated with that of India, as, in the course of several generations, to be no longer distinguished.

Among the ladies of Pondicherry, there are few that can boast of a white origin without mixture. If the filiation were in all instances transmitted by the whites, each branch of a family being of the same degree of fairness, the inconvenience would be small. But it will happen, that of two sisters, one will have married a Portuguese or some other White, and the other a Negro; and the second cousins may thus be some very white and others very black. The Whites may arrive at a considerable fortune, and the others remain in a state of servitude. This happens every day; and, as an example of it, I shall mention a person in office, a man of estimable character, who, having espoused a woman of equal rank, but whose father was of the party-coloured

Portuguese race.

tribe, was the first to jest upon the subject; and he did it so freely that it was a frequent cause of domestic quarrel. One of his pleasantries was, that he was fearful of correcting his servants, when they committed a fault, and that he always spoke to them civilly, from the idea, that among them might be some cousin-german of his wife.

I knew but two families at Pondicherry of perfectly pure blood; the children of the one were two sons who had married women of the country; the other had daughters only, who cannot perpetuate their name; so that in twenty years Pondicherry can boast but of a single family whose european filiation can be proved without mixture. These alliances are become so common, the portion of inhabitants known by the name of the portuguese cast is at present so considerable, and continues to increase with such rapidity, that, by aid of the missionaries, it will eventually terminate, to all appearance, in over-running the other casts,

with the exception of the Bramins, who are scrupulously attentive not only to prevent alliances with strangers, but also to avoid communication with them; and so far do they carry this, as even to break the vases, in which, by the laws of hospitality, they have given them to drink, when occasion has demanded it.

Bramins.

Ever remember, they say to their children from their infancy, that you are born to command other men. This lesson is repeated every day, and contributes perhaps as much as any thing else to generate in them the idea they entertain of their superiority over every other cast.

Be this at it may, the Bramins are in possession of eminent employments, great wealth, and unbounded esteem. They were probably indebted for this ascendency at first to their physical powers and their arms, and they preserved it by their virtues and understanding. The consideration they still enjoy rests on a similar

foundation, the knowledge they possess. It is certainly from the opinion which is formed of their virtue and sagacity, that they are placed in the first rank; but this is a matter of opinion only, and the first revolution in principles may do away the supremacy. They have already lost their physical superiority: their cast, like all the human race, is fallen off from the vigour which the first men must have possessed; the consideration resulting from arms has gone from them to the Moors, by whom they have been conquered. If any thing can maintain them in their present elevated rank, it is their secret as to their primitive language, their mysteries, the books of their religion, the knowledge derived from them, and more than all, perhaps, the privilege of being immediately charged with the ceremonies of worship, the altars, and the gods.

These altars are contained in small temples, called pagodas. Some of these edifices are very considerable, and cover a Pagodas.

great extent of ground; but it is by means of the adjacent buildings, the towers constructed over the gates, and the surrounding objects of the court, that the temples have so grand an appearance. The pagoda itself is a small edifice not capable of containing more than an hundred persons: it is generally situated in the middle of the court: the idol is placed on a little pedestal, ornamented with flowers, exposed to the veneration of the people. They burn before the image of the god a great quantity of cocoa-oil in a multitude of small lamps; they present it with offerings of fruits, milk, grain, oil, and flowers; at each offering a number of little bells, fastened to a machine of wood in the form of a triangle, are rung: this noise is agreeable both to the god and to the multitude; and whoever by his present has merited the favour of the bells, pays for it a sum of money for the benefit of the Bramins.

On this subject no one has written with

more accuracy than Sonnerat; I have traversed the country with his book in my hand, and have verified his accounts. I shall therefore avoid entering deeply into this subject after him, but shall refer those who wish for details on what relates to religion, the images that are adored, and the different emblems by which the different incarnations of Brama and the other divinities are represented, to the work itself.

Wisdom is worshipped under the image of a cow: we find this image in all the pagodas, placed on a large pedestal in the middle of the court; we meet with it also on the highways, where several roads meet, in a small nook cut in one of the extremities. The Indians pay particular devotion to this goddess, whose excrement they hold in great veneration: it has the property of keeping off insects; and those, therefore, who observe the rites by which the animal is adored, wash the interior of their houses with an infusion of cow-dung. They also plaster the walls on

the outside with it, so that the malabar houses in general are agreeable neither to the sight nor the smell.

Of their religious principles I shall mention one only, which is interesting to travellers.

Hospitality.

Hospitality is a virtue which their religion particularly recommends; and, on that account, a person on a journey is considered by them as a sacred object. There are indeed instances of individuals having been murdered for the sake of plunder: but that is not the fault of the dogma. In every part of the world men are to be found daring enough to despise all precepts; and though a few robbers here have violated this law of hospitality, it is in general strictly observed. A traveller is not only received with kindness, but his wants on the road are anticipated.

Chauderies.

Chauderies, which are places nearly similar to caravansaries, are built, in which he may enter freely, lodge, dress his provisions, if he has any, and depart without

paying any thing. The hospitality would certainly be greater if the poor traveller could find also something to eat; but a gratuitous asylum, in a country where the chief want is shelter from the inclemency of the climate, is at least a considerable accommodation.

These chauderies are sometimes very large; they are attended by a man whose business it is to sweep and keep them clean. A traveller arrives, and without ceremony takes possession of the house; for the moment it in a manner belongs to him. Another comes, the first makes room for him, and the new-comer, without saying a word, fixes himself wherever he pleases. The same rule is observed till the chauderie is full. When the heat has subsided, they proceed on their way, and gain the next halting-place. In the evening each lies down to sleep, the Indians without order or distinction: if an European be present, they have the complaisance to leave him a little corner to himself. Though hospitality be a point of reli-

gion among them, yet, to avoid the inconvenience it might occasion, particularly on commercial roads, they erect chauderies in their aldées or villages, and by that means are free from the visits of travellers, who never think of addressing themselves to the inhabitants when they can find a public-house; it is even possible, if they were to do so, they would in that case not be received. Independently of these chauderies in the villages or near them, there are others at regular distances on the roads in the country, far from any other habitation. The traveller, parched by an ardent sun, or assailed by a storm in the midst of an immense plain, and deprived of every other resource, thus finds, through the country he has to pass, a gratuitous shelter from the injuries of the weather and climate. If water should not be abundant in the neighbourhood, they are careful to dig large ponds, in which men and animals may bathe and quench their thirst.

The establishment of these chauderies

is not only a principle of religion, but is even a mode of atonement for sins. The rich are all anxious to have them built wherever they suppose them to be necessary. A *concussionaire*, or placeman, who has made an ill use of his authority, and acquired great riches by illicit means, expects, by building such establishments, to obtain forgiveness. To do good to travellers is to render himself agreeable to the Divinity; and a man like this, loaded with crimes, will die in tranquillity, persuaded that he shall enjoy eternal felicity in the bosom of Brama, if he has erected two or three chauderies. A very considerable number of these buildings is found in the neighbourhood of great towns, divided into apartments or cells, in which every traveller may be lodged separately; and some even have an adjoining house, better arranged, for the accommodation of persons of distinction; but in the country they are nothing more in general than paved squares, surrounded by walls on three sides, the front remaining open:

when the building is large, the front is ornamented with two or three columns to support the top.

These small chauderies have a strange peculiarity, respecting the motive of which I could never obtain the least information. The inside of all of them, or at least of nearly all, is lined with bass-reliefs from top to bottom; the walls, roof, column and pavement, are covered with rude pieces of sculpture, representing the most obscene objects, and forming pictures of the most disgusting lewdness. If building such edifices be a precept of their religion, it is difficult to believe that it prescribes so indecent a decoration.

Religious customs.

The dogma of Brama is not without dissentients. Some worship Chiven, or the bad principle; but whatever be the sect they follow, they have only one manner of rendering homage to the Divinity.

The worshipper prostrates himself, and

makes his offering in silence; the priests receive it; and when he pays generously, they apply to his arms and forehead a powder of either a red, white, black, or yellow colour, and sometimes all four. The manner of applying them varies according to the sect: those of the ritual of Chiven have three upright streaks in the form of a trident, to others they are applied cross-ways, without shape, and at random, while many have only a patch of this mastich, stuck on with cocoa-oil, with which the skin has been previously rubbed. Thus, however white may be his robe, and whatever pains he may take to keep himself clean, it is impossible not to feel disgusted when we see a Malabar newly daubed at his pagoda with this mastich, which looks as if he had first grinded it between his teeth, and had then smeared his face all over with it. To give a finishing stroke to the picture, let us figure to ourselves a mouth stuffed with beet-root, which, every time it opens, appears as if vomiting blood: such is the

sight, truly hideous, I have been describing.

If their private devotion be silent, their solemnities are extremely noisy. Almost every people have introduced singing among their religious ceremonies; some have adopted dancing. The Christians of the primitive church danced on holidays; and the bishops themselves conducted the performance. The Jews danced before the ark; they had danced also before the golden calf. Whether dancing was a peculiarity of their worship, which they brought from Egypt, or whether this petty nation, of so little consequence as to have no customs of her own, borrowed it from her conquerors in the time of her captivity, it is certain, that at very remote periods, dancing was introduced into the religious ceremonies of several people of Asia.

This custom has not been lost in India, but continues to this day. The dancers,

which the Portuguese have named *balliaderes*, are kept at the expense of the pagoda for the purpose of dancing at the solemnities: they administer also to the pleasures of the chiefs of the sect, who dispose of them as they please. These women have obtained great reputation by the accounts that have been given of them by travellers; but they appeared to me far beneath what has been said in their praise. Some of them, it must be acknowledged, are tolerably handsome: but their dance is by no means so engaging and voluptuous as has been described; and their manner of ornamenting themselves, which has made so much noise, has nothing captivating it, except the custom of painting a large black circle round the eyes. However ridiculous this may appear, it has certainly a very good effect on their figure, and gives to their look an incredible vivacity. Their head-dress is an *ourgandi*, commonly of rose-colour, blue or brown, and frequently embroi- Balliaderes.

dered with gold sprigs. Their clothing is rich, but without taste; and though they are sometimes alluringly dressed, they are never graceful. Their heads are covered with gold trinkets; the nose has a large ring, which they are obliged to lay aside when they eat; and their ears are frightfully loaded with an incredible number of rings of every description. This last decoration is not peculiar, but belongs to them in common with all the indian women. Their ears are pierced when young with a punch, and a spring is placed in the hole, serving gradually to enlarge it. The cartilage at length is so much dilated, that it is by no means uncommon to see a wooden spring, in shape like the spring of a watch, and of the diameter of a crown-piece, in the ears of a female. When they wish to be full dressed, they take out the spring, and put in its place as many trinkets as the aperture will admit. I have seen the ear so prodigiously loaded, that I was astonished the cartilage did not

break, and am still at a loss to conceive how it could bear so considerable a weight.

The balliaderes enjoy a sort of consideration and some honours among the multitude. As to the precedence they obtain, it is only in the interior of the pagoda, from their office placing them near the idol, before which they dance.

There have been some among them, who, notwithstanding the difficulty of gaining access to them, have strongly excited the passions of certain Europeans; and hence has arisen their reputation for beauty. For myself, I hesitate not to place them far beneath the female Bramins, who are of a much whiter colour (for some of the balliaderes are completely black), of a better look, more fresh, more plump; in a word, these were in my eyes desirable objects, while the balliaderes never made the least impression on my senses, even when aided by the

illusion of dancing. By the by, as every thing coming from afar is apt to appear wonderful to the imagination, it may not be amiss to inform the reader, that though the word dancing is applied alike to the mountebanks of India, and the nymphs of the opera at Paris, they are nevertheless very far from resembling each other, not only as to grace and talent in general, but even as to the particular species of talent belonging to the profession.

The dance of these women is a cadenced movement, executed to the sound of a drum, which a Black beats with his fingers, and which he accompanies with a song, that, to ears of the least delicacy, would seem barbarous. The mode of beating time is with a small bell or cymbal, which the dancing-master or person that conducts this species of ballet holds in his hand. This bell or cymbal he beats against the edge of another of the same kind, which produces a brisk vi-

brating sound, that animates the dancers, and gives precision to their movements. They display, however, no elegant attitudes, perform no particular steps, but are full of gesticulation, and the motion of the arms seems to occupy their whole care and attention. Sometimes, during the dance, they play with moorish poniards; an exercise at which they appeared to be expert. One of them, who was considered as eminently dextrous, was sent for one evening to the house of the malabar chief, to dance in my presence. Seemingly some one had given her a hint; for she took infinite pleasure in frightening me with her poniards, the points of which she presented to me suddenly, turning quickly round every time she passed near me, but stopping with great precision within a finger's breadth of my breast. This movement was directed and timed by a stroke of the small cymbal which the dancing-master struck unawares at my ear, and which never failed to make me start, to

the great amusement of the crowd, which this exhibition generally draws together.

The principal festivals on which the baliaderes publicly dance are: the hunting-day of the gods, the festival of the chariot, and that of the elephant. For a detail of these festivals consult Sonnerat. I shall merely observe, that the hunt of the gods is not celebrated at present with so much pomp as it was formerly, while the festival of the chariot has lost as yet nothing of its splendor. We may remark, nevertheless, whatever be the spirit of the revolution which seems to over-run the globe and undermine received opinions, that it appears to act upon the fanaticism of the Indians. Formerly all the chariot festivals were distinguished by the death of some individual who thought, that by getting himself crushed to pieces or lamed by the wheels or sharp instruments with which the chariots are armed, he should render himself worthy of heaven; a re-

spectable opinion, because it partakes of religion. But now, though they are still equally convinced of the happiness enjoyed in another world by those who devote themselves to this kind of death, the number of victims is notwithstanding considerably diminished; few are to be found who wish to purchase future felicity at so dear a rate; and, if we except the pagoda of Jagrenat, the most celebrated in India, where at most scarcely one bigot perishes in this manner in a year, they are no longer seen throwing themselves down before the chariot in the procession; or, if any one should do so, he takes care to avoid the fatal wheel, and comes off safe and sound, or, at the worst, with only a slight injury.

We find however in India as great a number of faquirs as formerly: these people still devote themselves to misery; but happiness in the other world is not their motive, and they would probably Faquirs.

be much less numerous, if they did not find here a recompence for the punishments they impose on themselves, in the extraordinary consideration they enjoy, and the respect which is lavished on them. He who devotes himself to death, and seeks the consummation of his wishes under the wheels of the sacred chariot, has the full reward of his pain to expect hereafter: during this life he does not receive the least portion of it. This charm is not so forcible as that of the faquirs. Faith in Brama alone may make martyrs of the chariot; pride governs the others, and supports them in the pains they endure. To enable them to bear the tortures to which they subject themselves, this pride must be great, and must have an astonishing empire over the human heart.

Of the instances of this kind which struck me, that of keeping the hand constantly closed was the one that inspired me with the deepest sentiment of horror

and pity for the unhappy being who was the object of it. The faquir who devoted himself to this species of punishment, had his hand pierced by his nails, which, continuing to grow notwithstanding that posture, had cut through the metacarpus, and came out again between the muscles by which the fingers are moved. Conceive what must be the duration of a pain like this, and the constancy of him who endured it!

The priests, however, are very great jugglers, and possess the art of imposing wonderfully on the people. I saw an instance of it in the neighbourhood of Pondicherry, at the festival of fire. A woman, with an infant at her breast, passed barefoot twice over a red-hot pan of the length of twenty feet, without the smallest indication of pain. She walked slowly; and what invincibly proves to me the juggling of the priests, is, that her feet, which I had the curiosity to examine,

bore not the slightest mark of being burnt. I could obtain no proof that the woman participated in the craft of the priest; it is possible, that, taking advantage of her confidence, simplicity and credulity, he might have applied, without her knowledge, some greasy substance to her feet, the virtue of which was to prevent the action of the fire: but whether she was privy to it or not, some such means must certainly have been employed. Among the multitude, however, there was not an individual, my dobachi excepted, who was reputed a man of understanding, that was not persuaded that the power of the Divinity alone had preserved her from the effects of the fire. I am ignorant whether the chemists in Europe have the secret of rendering the skin fire-proof; but I know that it is not confined to the frontiers of India; for I have found it on the coast of Africa, in the fiery ordeals which the Negroes of Congo are made to undergo, when accused of a crime they are obliged

to expiate. The Gangas conduct this ceremony, and destroy or acquit the accused according to their pleasure.

The priests are far from being the only jugglers, and I do not even think them the most expert. Their tricks, prepared by time, and aided by superstition, have a great advantage over those of other men, and are more likely to succeed. But nothing can surpass the dexterity of their rivals, from whom our best slight-of-hand men might receive lessons. Jugglers.

In deceptive tricks, such as vomiting fire, pieces of flaming hemp and flax, a considerable quantity of thorns, and appearing to draw away the whole of their intestines by the mouth, and swallow them again, with other facetious performances of a similar kind, they succeed by main force, and carry the art to astonishing perfection. In these feats of strength, there is no delusion, no slight-of-hand, no deception: what we see is precisely what

we think we see. One of these performances is of a nature to contradict all the laws of anatomy, and which no surgeon could believe till he had witnessed it. I have known some who were even incredulous after they had seen it, and who refused to trust the evidence of their eyes.

An Indian, naked like his fellows, with no muslin round him, nor any clothing whatever to serve as a cloak and facilitate deception, takes a sword, the edge and point of which are rounded off and blunted, and putting it into his mouth, buries it completely, all but the haft, in his throat and intestines.

I have observed some of these men from whom the momentary irritation caused by the insertion of this strange body has forced tears; others to whom it gave an inclination to cough, which, as they were not able to satisfy it, obliged them to withdraw the blade instantly, to

prevent suffocation. In fine, when the sword has entered as far as it can, to the depth of more than two feet, they fix a small petard to the hilt, set fire to it, and bear its explosion: they then draw out the sword, which is covered with the humidity of the intestines.

I know that a fact of such description will be regarded by readers in general as a fable, to which they conceive they should give no credit. At this I shall not be surprised: till I had seen it I refused myself to believe it; but I was under the necessity at last of yielding to the force of evidence; and the exhibition of it is now so common at Pondicherry, that among the travellers who have visited that town, there is not one, perhaps, who has not witnessed it.

Independently of these people, there are also rope-dancers, who perform dangerous leaps, which those in Europe could not imitate. But of all their jugglers the

most amusing are those who are thought to have the virtue of enchanting serpents, and they have at least the art.

India abounds in reptiles of every description, and particularly in serpents.

Serpents.

Travellers who are not sufficient naturalists to class them, distinguish three principal sorts: First, the minute-serpent, which is a small black sort, with yellow rings, found frequently in pastures. The corrosive matter contained in the vesicles of this animal is so sharp and violent, that it causes almost instant death. The general opinion of old women and the multitude is, that a person may live just as many minutes after being bit as the reptile has rings round its body: and hence the name that is given it, of minute-serpent. It is certain, that the ravages caused by its poison are so sudden, that the best alkali applied to the wound, at the very moment of the bite, can scarcely counteract it so effectually as to preserve life, and

never prevents the part from being affected with marasm, languor and palsy.

The bezoar-stone is not of sufficient efficacy against the venom of this serpent, and is not even capable of protracting death. It is true, that the greater part of those which are purchased in this country are not genuine, or at least are very bad. The Indians have the talent of fabricating them, so as to resemble perfectly the good ones, and the greatest skill is necessary not to be mistaken. The bezoar-dealers generally bring them to Pondicherry and Madras, and have at the same time large scorpions, by which to try the efficacy of the stone. The best are without contradiction those which are found in the bladder of the antelope; the dealers say they are all derived from that animal. These men suffer themselves to be stung in the finger by an enormous black scorpion, which they irritate by striking it on the back. The wounded part is then made to bleed by pressing it,

Bezoar.

and they immediately apply the bezoar, making all kinds of contortions as they do it, to persuade the spectators that they feel a great deal of pain. After a few minutes they pull away the stone, notwithstanding its close adhesion to the wound, which is now stopped from bleeding, has no swelling or appearance of irritation, and is perfectly cured. If the bezoar thus made use of be seized immediately by the intended purchaser, there is no doubt of his obtaining a good one; but it often happens, that, under pretence of washing it, it is dextrously conveyed away, and a factitious calculus without virtue substituted in its stead.

The second description of serpent is that called by the Portuguese *capelle,* from *capella,* a cloak. It is distinguished by a membrane on each side of the head, which are in general not perceived; but whenever the animal is irritated, they rise up and form a kind of head-dress, that gives it a very beautiful appearance. This serpent

is very dangerous and extremely irascible; but alkali radically cures its bite.

The third species is the house-serpent, which is not in the smallest degree either dangerous or irascible. It glides into the cradle of infants, without occasioning the least accident. Yet we naturally feel an emotion of horror, when we find them in our dwellings; particularly, as we are not sure at first sight of what kind they may be. As soon, therefore, as one of these reptiles is discovered, care is taken to destroy it; and if it is not to be caught, the enchanter is sent for.

This man arrives loaded with baskets, in which are snakes and serpents of every kind. His legs are furnished with a description of rings, which dangle at liberty on the ancle. These rings are cut in two breadthwise, and the two parts hollowed, so that at each motion of the charlatan's foot, the two sides strike against each other and produce a very shrill noise, re-

sembling the sound of a brass bason when struck with a hammer. Another instrument is also employed, called a drone bagpipe, of which the bag is pressed under the arm. The noise of this instrument is so great, that the serpent, stunned and overcome by it, is easily taken.

The conjuror begins by making the serpents in the baskets dance; but he does not expose them till he has played some time to stupefy them a little: yet in spite of this precaution, as soon as the baskets are opened, the capelles in particular seem inclined to be angry rather than to dance, and, by provoking them, they rise up, and assume a threatening posture.

The man keeps near them, and strikes occasionally with his foot to stupefy them quickly. When the right effect is produced, a giddiness takes place, the eye loses its lustre, and the serpent, by attempting to balance itself, exhibits the appearance of dancing.

The reptile that is to be caught, attracted by the noise, is sure to leave its retreat, and the sight of its fellow-creatures appears to decide the affair; for it readily joins them, follows their example, and soon partakes of their supineness.

The conjuror then puts a basket over its head, and shutting it up in it carries it off with the rest, amongst which it figures in its turn, and equals them in docility. The enchanter asks no other reward for his trouble than the animal he has thus caught.

In every country, those who live on the credulity of others seldom fail to give to their actions an appearance of the marvellous, thereby the more surely to impose on the multitude. It is with this view that the enchanters of serpents persuade the spectators, that a few grains of rice will destroy the enchantment which they pretend to operate on the reptile, will expose their persons to the greatest danger,

and render their instrument mute. Europeans seldom fail to throw a small quantity at them, and they are generally alert in seizing the moment when this is done. The instant they perceive the rice, they pretend to be no longer able to draw tones from their bag-pipes, and they fall into fits. The serpents, hearing no noise, recover from their delirium, and endeavour to escape. Fear instantly disperses the crowd, the most intrepid amongst which endeavour to bring the conjuror to himself; who, when he sees his reptiles beginning to crawl off, is one of the first to recover his senses. When rice is thrown without their knowledge, this farce does not take place; an evident proof that it is all deception and trick.

Dress.

The Indians use no pomatum for the hair, but, believing as we do, that a fat substance contributes to its preservation, they substitute cocoa-oil instead of it. The Malabars use but little of this oil, but the portuguese cast employ it in profusion.

When the oil is fresh, there is nothing disagreeable in the smell; but as no powder is worn, it soon becomes rancid, and acquires a stench, to which the people of the country are accustomed, but that is extremely disagreeable to a stranger. Ladies of the most elegant appearance have often occasioned me a nausea, in spite of their pretensions to beauty, and the high opinion they entertained of their charms. Good breeding requires that this disgust should be concealed, but I have often abridged my visits to escape the cruel odour that pursued me in every company. Another custom, no less disagreeable to strangers, and which habit has made absolutely necessary to Indians of all casts and both sexes, is that of chewing betel.

Betel is a small shrub bearing a leaf similar in size and shape to that of the mulberry, and nearly of the same contexture as an ivy-leaf. Like the latter, it is smooth and of a deep green on one side. Its smell is strong, aromatic, and pun- Betel.

gent, and its taste so sharp and violent that it cannot be borne by itself. To render it milder, arec-nut and a little lime are taken with it, which are rolled up in the leaf before they begin to chew it. The betel excites such a prodigious quantity of saliva, that the inhabitants of the country are obliged to keep dishes constantly near them to spit in; in some houses they are even placed on the table. The lime strips the teeth, destroying both them and the gums, while the arec dies the mouth of a colour resembling blood, and which is frightful to behold. Accordingly, nothing can be more disgusting than the mouth of these Indians. The black teeth, bare to the very roots, corroded and covered by a red tartar, give them an appearance the more shocking, as they seem every moment to spit blood. Arec stains also of that colour every thing about them, and their handkerchiefs in particular are dreadfully disagreeable to strangers. It requires a long residence in the country to become habituated to this practice.

Machines.

Mechanism and the arts are still in their infancy throughout India. The natives have no machines, no instruments out of the common way, nor the least knowledge of hydraulics: they have scarcely even the necessary utensils for the works they undertake. Neither their carpenters nor joiners have benches, but work sitting on the ground, employing their great toe to keep firm whatever they are working at, which they persevere with great patience in fashioning. They make little use of the axe, as it obliges them to work standing; but they do not fear attacking any thing, however large, with the chisel, which they can use sitting. The whole of a joiner's tools in this country consists of a miserable line, a chisel, a mallet, and a saw. With these instruments alone, assisted by patience, they accomplish any work of which a pattern is given them.

The goldsmiths are no better furnished. You send for a workman either in gold or silver whenever you have occasion for one,

and he places himself in a corner of the court with his implements, consisting of a hammer, an anvil, an indifferent file, a portable forge, and a crucible. With these he works a whole day to make a ring, and will succeed in fabricating other articles that require no great invention. There are some, however, that they will not undertake. Our best european productions are above their ability; but they make notwithstanding, in their way, a very considerable variety.

Smiths are equally behind hand, and yet find no inconvenience in forging every thing. They place themselves they care not where, make a small hole in the ground, and kindle a fire in it. To the fire they apply a pair of bellows made of two sheep-skins well sewed together, terminating in a tube at one end to conduct the air, but open at the other, and nailed to two pieces of wood serving as handles. The smith, seated before his fire, works these bellows with his hands, while his

feet are employed in holding or turning his iron in the fire: when it is hot, he ceases blowing, and his anvil being near, he forges whatever he wishes without rising. If the piece he would heat be too large for one pair of bellows, he employs two, and could even use three without any other inconvenience than having two children to assist in working them. Thus, a hammer, an anvil, and two sheep-skins, are every thing he stands in need of. With these he will fabricate every article of iron-work necessary in building a house.

Their sculptors have no better implements than their joiners, and there cannot be a greater curiosity than to see with what address they fashion the blocks under foot.

Except for linen cloths, they have no painters. They stretch the cloth in their court-yard, and sit down to work on it; for here, as in every other trade, they are

ignorant how to do any thing standing. Their tools consist of a brush or two of bamboo-wood, of which the ends are beaten soft, and converted into threads of no great fineness. With these wretched instruments dipped in colour, which they keep in a kind of wooden box, they design and paint the beautiful indian goods, which we find it difficult to imitate in Europe. They hold the brush between the first and second fingers, in the same manner as they hold the pen when they write; but they have no great need of patience in this talent, as they design with admirable celerity.

Of all their tools or machines, that used in weaving approaches the nearest to ours. In Pondicherry, there are some formed exactly on the same model; but in the villages they are much more simple. In other respects, with the exception of the workman's convenience, and the excellence of the different parts, their looms are very much like ours, and produce the same effects,

Nothing can be more portable than they are: when a family moves to fresh quarters, or sets out on a journey, a child will bear the whole machine in its arms, when taken to pieces, and thus carry the fortune of the whole house.

The instrument used by carders of cotton is the only one which seemed to me to be ingenious. Cotton is the source of their wealth; and it is therefore not surprising, that they should have bestowed on a machine that prepares it for spinning some additional pains. It is large, with a head nearly resembling the handle of a violin. On this instrument a large gut is stretched, which they pinch with the cotton, and the vibration, tossing it in the air, separates and cleans it perfectly.

Their spinning-wheels are exactly like the large wheel which our peasants use in spinning wool. The fineness of the thread depends on the skill of the workman.

Their architecture, relatively speaking, is not at all superior to their other arts. Its proportions are considerably abbreviated: without having examined this subject minutely, it appears to me that they have two orders; one short and heavy, with mouldings similar to the tuscan; the other longer, light, and slender, terminating in a head like a cabbage, different from that of the corinthian order, yet serving as a substitute for it, without partaking of its elegance.

The manner in which they build large edifices is rather extraordinary. Their houses are of brick, and in erecting these they proceed in the ordinary way: but when they have pagodas or chauderies to construct, and great weights to lift to a considerable height, they act upon a very different plan. As they have neither palankas, masts, cranes, nor any other instrument for the accumulation of force, they introduce a very ingenious substitute,

The foundations are laid as usual, and the first row of stones being raised above the surface, they throw up earth against it, and slope it down on the outside. In laying the second row, they roll the stones on by means of this slope, and thus get them to their place without the least inconvenience; then bringing more earth, they increase the slope, and lay every row of stones in the same manner till the whole is complete; so that when the building is finished it is perfectly buried, and is no bad resemblance of a small mountain sloped regularly on all sides. The earth is afterwards carried away, and the building remains entire.

The interior of the houses of the opulent is plastered with a kind of mastic, which they call stucco. This composition exactly resembles marble; and when it is well made, it becomes so hard, and acquires so beautiful a polish, that, if not exposed to the injuries of the air, it will last upwards of twenty years. It is com-

posed of sifted lime, when no plaster can be got, mixed with sugar, oil, and the white of eggs.

Shoe-makers are the best furnished with tools, but they do not sew their leather as we do, but have a small instrument like that used by embroiderers in Europe; the thread is therefore passed double through the sole, and another thread run through the loops, which are drawn tight upon it. This method of sewing takes very little time, and indeed great expedition is used through the whole business. A workman takes measure for a pair of shoes in the morning, kills a goat, takes off its skin, tans it for the leather of which they are to be made, and after dinner brings them home to all appearance handsome and good. This quick mode of tanning must of course be very defective, the process being excessively astringent; but the hide, without excepting even the colour, is not unlike our green leather. They take measure by spanning the foot, and

by merely touching it will make a shoe fit well; but the materials of which the shoe is made are wretched. The principal inconvenience arises from the skins being so recently dressed. When the shoe is first tried on, the leather is humid and flexible, but it soon becomes as hard as parchment. I am speaking of shoes for sale. The second inconvenience arises from its being sewed with cotton; for if, by accident, you put your foot into water, the thread gives way, and the shoe comes to pieces; and even if you have the good fortune to keep clear of water, and the cotton be good enough to last a day or two, the first false step will burst the upper-leather. With such shoes it is impossible to dance long, and accordingly if you attend a ball, and have no european shoes, it is necessary to have two or three pair that are sewed with silk. To remedy this inconvenience, the inhabitants of Pondicherry have thread from Europe, which is used instead of cotton, and the shoes, if

carefully made, will last a much longer time.

Machines. The principal object of cultivation in India is rice. Very little wheat is grown, and that little is intended for the use of Europeans. The Indians, comprehending even the portuguese cast, live almost entirely upon rice, so that having scarcely any corn to grind, they are in no want of mills. It would be easy to erect windmills, but they are fortunate in being able to do without them, as calms and hurricanes would render them useless during a great part of the year; and as to water-mills, the country is so level, that no streams are to be found of sufficient force to put the wheels in motion. They reduce their grain to flour, notwithstanding, by the use of hand-mills. The population is so considerable, the means of industry so scarce, and manual labour of course so cheap, that no inconvenience is felt from the want of machinery. It is true, they

can never apply any considerable force; but I have seen them adopt in lieu of it, in their shipping, some very ingenious means, and as little complicated as that which I before mentioned in building their houses.

They use a kind of mill to extract oil from cocoa, which, though very imperfect, yields them the same advantages as a better. Several Europeans would have furnished them with models. Mr. Beggle even constructed a large mill at Madras, that was worked by oxen. It consisted of several wheels, gained prodigiously in point of expedition over the mills of the country, and answered in every respect much better. The Blacks examined and admired it, but persisted in the use of their own, for reasons which appeared to me judicious. To erect such a mill a great number of materials were necessary, and a considerable expense would be incurred. An Indian could not afford this, and the machine required besides too many oxen and

hands to work it. The rich, in whose power it was to speculate in this way, considered it as beneath them, and were unwilling to turn their views further than the cloth-trade and stock-jobbing. A person of the lower class, who devotes himself to this sort of work, has but two oxen, and frequently only one. His

Mills.

mill consists of a large vase, in which a pivot, fixed to a beam and worked by his oxen, presses the cocoa, and extracts the oil. This machine is erected in the open air, and requires neither house nor servants. Himself alone, between his two beasts, regulates their pace, and works just as much as suffices for his subsistence. The extraction of cocoa-oil is the only process that requires a mill.

The Indians have neither barn nor threshing-floor for their rice. A man, squat on his heels, takes a handful of the straw in his left hand, places it on a block of wood that is before him, and beats it with a kind of mallet which he holds in

the other hand. However great the quantity they have to thresh, this is the only method they employ, increasing the number of hands in proportion to the work. When the grain is cleared from its outward covering, and they wish to cook it, they throw a portion into a large mortar, made of the trunk of a tree, hollowed in the shape of a reversed cone, and which will hold about twenty pounds. In this vessel they stir and pound it with a large stick for several hours. As this must be done standing, it fatigues them greatly. The rice by the friction is so well cleared as to be ready to winnow and wash for use.

Their land is cultivated by the plough. That which has a spring of water near it is appropriated to the growth of rice, that it may be laid under water at pleasure. The fields are divided into small compartments, similar to a salt-pit in Europe. The banks are raised about a foot above the surface to retain the water upon the land.

It is well known that humidity, combined with heat, produces vegetation, and it appears that rice, to make it thrive well, requires a great deal of water. I am aware that there is a kind of mountain-rice; but it is probable, that to the acceleration of the growth of this kind of rice water is not essentially necessary; and it is thought besides to be unwholesome, and to occasion dysenteries. The low-land rice, to grow fast, ought to be constantly covered with six inches of water. The land is never drained till the grain is nearly ripe.

Watering. In watering it, the genius of the Indians is particularly manifested. Having no hydraulic machines, or the means of applying great mechanical force, they employ an instrument which they call a *picote*, or at least which Europeans have so named for them.

The soil in the plains of the peninsula of India is not yet entirely drained, its surface alone being free from the element which formerly overwhelmed it. This

soil does not rest on a solid foundation, and if dug to any depth, the water, which has not been able to run off in the few ages that have elapsed since its retreat from the surface, is instantly found. From its filtering through the earth, assisted by the supply it receives from the rain and torrents that pour from the mountains in the rainy seasons, the saline and bituminous qualities it contained are in a great measure lost, and it is become in many places drinkable, while in others it is brackish. The cultivators, therefore, have only to dig in a corner of a field, to have a well fit for watering it. Near this well they set up a pole about fifteen or eighteen feet high, which serves as a resting-point to a strong lever, a fourth part longer than the pole, placed on an axis shorter than the pole by about three-fourths. The large end, by which it is moved up and down, is loaded with a sufficient weight to answer that purpose. To the small end they hang a pole equal in length to the depth of the well, and they fasten to it a

kettle, that will hold about half a barrel of water, more or less. A Black at the brink of the well sinks this kind of bucket, and when it is filled another Black mounts upon the lever, walks towards the heavy end, and his weight, added to that already affixed to it, raises the water to the edge of the well, where the Black, stationed for the purpose, empties it into the canal destined to receive it, and it is thus conveyed into the different compartments of the field.

This work they perform with great agility every morning and evening to the tune of a song calculated to charm its irksomeness and fatigue. A picote, when the Blacks exert themselves well, will draw up five barrels in a minute; there are few machines that would draw as much, at so little expense and with no more hands.

The Indians are in general sober and lazy; little suffices for their wants, and

that little obtained no motive will induce them to work for more. When a person of the lower class therefore has earned a couple of rupees, he can purchase a sack of rice, and while this lasts he would remain in idleness: but the tax-gatherers take good care to leave him scarcely any means of indulging his natural propensity. Their exactions surpass any thing that can be said of them. The wretched inhabitants can with difficulty scrape together three or four rupees without its coming to the knowledge of these men, by whom they are instantly extorted.

The Indians cultivate also cotton and indigo: the former is the small cotton of the Antilles, which they cultivate and gather as in other places; but their manner of macerating and precipitating indigo is different from that of any other country. We see none of those large establishments which are to be met with in our islands; nor have they any tubs to beat and macerate a great number of herbs at a time. A

workman who is in want of a small quantity of indigo, macerates and beats it in a pot. This process is so slow as to require all his patience, and would not answer for a manufactory of any extent. They frequently leave it to precipitate of itself; and as, if the water be not sufficiently stirred to detach the particles of indigo, it becomes difficult to precipitate, they accelerate it with lime. This practice is common in Cayenne, whence it has passed to the Isle of France.

To the cultures before mentioned the Indians add that of cocoa-trees. I have observed in another part of this work, that this tree is the most valuable present which man has received from the hands of nature. I shall not enter here into an explanation of the numerous advantages derived from it, or to what uses the fruit, hair, leaves, and wood, are applied: I shall merely observe, that these trees never fail to make the fortune of those who possess any quantity of them in the neighbourhood of

the towns of India. A person having a small garden containing three hundred cocoa-plants, which require no great space on account of the small distance at which they are planted from each other, will derive from it a sufficient income for his support without any other resource. Of these plants a hundred will in this case be appropriated to the production of *calou* or palm-wine, while the rest bear fruit, from which they extract oil, and afterwards sell the hair for the use of the shipping. Such an estate at Pondicherry would be worth a thousand rupees a year: an enormous sum for an Indian. Some idea may be formed of the price of living in that town by what is charged at inns and boarding-houses. In the latter, for thirty rupees a month, you live luxuriously: and the terms have been considerably raised to make it amount to that price, for before the war they were much lower. It is easy to conceive, that a private family has many advantages over such houses.

Calou. Their calou, or palm-wine, is extracted in the same way as on the coast of Africa, the liquor being drawn from an incision made in one of the principal branches; but their method of climbing the tree is very different. The Black employed in this work puts his feet into a rope-ring about six inches long, which keeps th from separating, and enables him to f sure footing on the rough trunk of tree, on which he climbs, by clasping with his arms and rising about six incl at a stretch.

Fruits. The common fruits of India are t banana, pisang, sweet and bitter oran citron, shaddock, ananas, mango, pa cularly a species of extraordinary de cacy growing at Velour, cinnamon appl otherwise called atte, jam rosa, letcl mangosteen and sarangosteen; and at M dras the bread-fruit begins to appe These are all too well known for any them to require a description.

European vegetables succeed there tolerably well. Of those which are natural to the climate, the principal are brette and ignam. Brette resembles spinage, and is cooked in the same way: it is very bitter, and requires seasoning. The Indians esteem it highly in a dish called cari. Ignam is a farinaceous root of a high flavour, and is eaten like bread.

I shall say nothing of the ornithology of India, Sonnerat having perfectly exhausted the subject; but I shall venture to affirm, as to quadrupeds, that the elephant is not yet thoroughly known in Europe. With all the respect I entertain for Buffon, I cannot ascribe it to modesty that this animal does not multiply in captivity. It is in this state by no means disinclined to love, but seeks the female, though not in season, and greatly caresses her. The penis of the elephant is directed forward as in other quadrupeds, and contracts itself into a case like that of the horse. It is seldom indeed that this animal propa-

gates in confinement, but there are certainly instances of it. I saw myself a young one at Bengal born so lately that it was necessary to put boiled rice into its mouth, as, unless fed in this manner, it was incapable of eating. Though what I have advanced upon this subject may be at variance with the observations that have been made in Europe, where the male and female elephant have been kept together, I ought not to be hastily condemned; for the manners of an animal, shut up with its mate in a cage, are certainly different from those which it would assume in its own country, where it enjoys, in the extensive parks in which it is kept among a number of its fellows, such liberty, that it seems scarcely to have any sense of its confinement.

The elephant is not so heavy in its motions as many have supposed, and is capable of acquiring by exercise considerable agility: I have seen it skip and leap with ease and lightness. All that has been

said of its sagacity appears to me to be perfectly true: I shall not enumerate the instances, already well known, that have been cited in proof of it.

The use of this animal is become very common in India. Though it bears a high price, and its maintenance is expensive, there are few persons of any wealth who have not several. They are employed in carrying burdens, for taking the air, for hunting and for war. Those employed in war are extremely courageous, and often display more bravery than many men. Those trained to the chase are used only against tigers.—I shall resume this subject when I come to the article of Bengal.

Venereal disease.

In the catalogue of diseases to which the Indians are subject, the venereal holds a distinguished place. It is not known to whom they were originally indebted for this fatal present, which has now established itself among all casts of the na-

tives, except the Bramins, and has extended its ravages even to the dogs, most of which bear evident marks of the infection. Few of the inhabitants are free from a gonorrhœa, and nature seems to have foreseen, that the height to which the disorder would rise in this climate would be such, as to baffle the effects of all european remedies, and to have therefore provided in the root *curanelli*, a medicine that would prove efficacious in the most obstinate cases. Were this remedy more generally resorted to, the disorder, instead of being ruinous, would be found beneficial to the health of the people; since, as a purifier, it has a tendency to prevent the putrid complaints which are common in this country, as well as inflammations of the bowels.

Another disorder which greatly prevails here, of a no less depurative nature, and which, with proper treatment, would produce effects equally salutary, is the itch; but it is attended with one disagree-

able circumstance, from which the former is exempt, that of making itself apparent. The inhabitants have a common saying, "that love and the itch cannot be concealed;" and they prefer to this complaint the gonorrhœa, which besides, by serving them as a sort of issue perpetually open, is of material benefit to their health.

Pondicherry, at the time of my being there, contained only from four hundred and fifty to five hundred Europeans at most. As it was not likely that so inconsiderable a population could produce much diversity, or at least much contrariety, of interests, it might have been hoped, that this colony would escape the effects of the commotions which were overthrowing the governments of Europe. It was visited, however, by the revolutionary mania, which displayed all the symptoms of extravagance that characterised the Jacobins of France, and it is only to be ascribed to the firmness of the chevalier Revolution.

De Fresne, the governor, that the explosion did not prove fatal to half the inhabitants. The detachment of which the garrison was composed was still retained in the strictest discipline; and the indefatigable zeal of this officer would probably have averted all the troubles by which the colony has been since agitated, had there not been sent from France, for the purpose of strengthening the place, a battalion of infantry, which was soon followed by commissaries. Notwithstanding the pacific endeavours of one of these, the commissary of the marine, he was unable to prevent the establishment of revolutionary forms in the garrison, which at last obliged the governor to retire; and his departure consigned the place to the fate which afterwards befel it.

Tippoo.

By the celebrated peace which lord Cornwallis had some time before concluded with Tippoo, the english company obtained half of that prince's territory. Tranquil in the midst of its possessions, it

now saw its rivals enfeebling themselves, and enjoyed, without the prospect of danger, the fruit of its conquests.

Its real situation was nevertheless on the mouth of a volcano, the explosion of which depended upon the conduct of its enemies. The treaty that was ultimately to overthrow its powers was even projected and arranged; but subsequent events did not permit it to be carried into execution, and fate seemed resolved to perpetuate the triumph of the English.

The intelligence of the french revolution had reached the court of Tippoo, who judged, that the establishment of a new order of things in France might produce a change of sentiment in his favour, and reanimate the allies who had abandoned him. Upon this presumption he founded those resolutions, which have since, in their consequences, involved his total ruin.

In one of his military movements, prior to the period when lord Cornwallis marched with an army from Bengal for the purpose of giving him battle, Tippoo advanced towards Pondicherry, and encamped upon the neighbouring hill. The rules of policy not permitting the french governor to violate his neutrality by admitting him into the town, Tippoo requested, that Mr. L—, the intendant of the place, might be sent to him. This officer, who was commissary of marine, had by a long application to the moorish language, acquired so intimate a knowledge of it, that he could understand the sultan without an interpreter. At this interview Tippoo explained his intentions to him with confidence; and it was in consequence of the plan which was at this time formed, that Mr. L— embarked for France two months afterwards, in the Thetis frigate, to solicit from the government a closer alliance with Tippoo, and such aid as might enable him to make an effectual

resistance to the arms of the english company.

Elated with the importance of his mission, and ambitious of returning to the sultan in the character of plenipotentiary, the commissary could see no obstacle to the execution of the project, and persuaded himself of the certainty of its success.

He had little difficulty in inspiring an unfortunate and unassisted prince with all the hope which he himself entertained. It was from this fatal confidence that Tippoo consented to the sacrifices which he made by the peace with lord Cornwallis, being sure, as he thought, when his expected treaty with France should be ratified, of recovering what he ceded. That country however, which was at this time too much occupied with its more immediate and pressing concerns, to afford any share of its consideration to those of India, deferred for the present the alliance; and

it was not till the success of its arms against its external enemies allowed it to turn its attention to the interests of the sultan, that the directory, having fallen upon the sketch of the treaty projected in the camp before Pondicherry, gave him those assurances which led this ill-fated nabob to point at last the cannon that was to shatter his throne to atoms.

Had the state of Europe, instead of preventing the close alliance which Tippoo solicited, allowed France to send a body of troops to Pondicherry, the fall of that prince would probably not have taken place; and the French would still have possessed an ally, and have kept a footing in India, by which, in times of greater tranquillity, to re-establish their commerce. The death therefore of Tippoo, and the expulsion of his family from the throne which his father had conquered, are to be added to the long list of calamities, which it has fallen to the lot of France to experience.

Siege of Pondi-cherry.

The abolition of the monarchy in France having involved the new government in a war with England, all the French settlements in India fell into the hands of the latter nation. Pondicherry was the only place that made any resistance; but colonel Braithwaite obliged it to surrender, though not till the trenches had been open before it thirteen days. The garrison consisted chiefly of a battalion of european troops, called the battalion of India, which was composed of about two hundred men, the remnant of the troops which had been left at the evacuation of the place; two hundred who had arrived since in the vessel the *Bienvenue*, and who might probably be reduced to a hundred and fifty; and four hundred recruits from L'Orient, in the ship, the Chancellor of Brabant, which discharged upon the shore of India, with these new soldiers, every principle of disorder and insubordination. The rest of the garrison consisted of a battalion of Cipahis, of about the same number; such of the inhabitants who could bear arms,

amounting at most to two hundred, and equipped as cavalry; and a detachment of artillery, of about sixty men, including the Caffres who were attached to it. Thus the whole force of the besieged did not exceed sixteen hundred and sixty men, of whom half were native troops; yet with no other fortification than a ditch and banks of crumbling earth, the garrison held out for thirteen days, and repulsed two assaults of an army provided with every requisite to ensure success.

Yanaon.

Though Pondicherry was the only place that defended itself (and it was the only one that had the means), Yanaon would at least show a desire of doing the same. Mr. Sonnerat, the estimable author of the work on the religions of India, commanded in this place for the king. The troubles of the revolution had not spared even this obscure spot of ground; and six commercial houses, which composed the whole european population of the village, were seen with astonishment neglecting

their private affairs, to attend to disputes, and the business of deposing the commandant. Mr. Sonnerat however recovered his authority, and the governor of Pondicherry having thought proper to send him a reinforcement of six soldiers of colour, he purchased two marine guns, by the help of which he resolved to oppose any hostile attack. Desirous of entwining a branch of the laurel with the wreath which he had already merited by his excellent scientific observations as a naturalist, he made preparations for defending himself with this small force. Though the idea of such an attempt was ludicrous, it deceived the english commander in that part of India, Yeates, who granted him a capitulation. Accordingly Mr. Sonnerat did not surrender this insignificant village without obtaining the honours of war, and the merchants settled there were indebted to him for conditions, which ensured to them their property and their trade.

Thus fell this fair structure, which,

reared upon the foundations laid by Dupleix and Labourdonnaye, appeared at first to afford the prospect of aspiring to the clouds. Alas, it had scarcely risen from the earth, when this catastrophe laid it low, perhaps for ever!

Plan against the Isle of France.

Not satisfied with the total expulsion of the French from the continent of India, the english company thought its task unfinished till it should also make itself master of the Isles of France and Bourbon, the only possessions of its rivals to the east of the Cape of Good Hope, but which might be a source of perpetual annoyance and alarm.

For this enterprise a force of ten thousand men was allotted, who were on the point of embarking when war was suddenly declared between the nizam of Golconda and the states of the Mahrattas. Tippoo, seeing his frontiers thus exposed to the effects of these hostilities, took up arms as a measure of caution; and the

english government not thinking it prudent to employ so great a force in a foreign expedition, when its neighbours at home were in this posture, the troops received counter orders, and the undertaking was for the present abandoned.

A fault committed by the government of Madras at this time, has since put these islands in security against any future attempt. Towards the close of his reign, Louis XVI. had turned his thoughts to the affairs of India; and the daily changes in the ministry having at last brought into office some individual who fixed his attention on the means of preserving Pondicherry, and re-establishing it as a military post, the king ordered lieutenant-colonel de Feline, an officer of talents, to be sent out, for the purpose of preparing a system of defence, and of acquiring a knowledge of the country in which he would have himself to carry on a war. This officer, however, being provided neither with men nor money, could effect nothing, and was taken with the place which he was sent to

defend. Being a prisoner, he requested his liberty, on condition of not serving again during the war, and it was granted him. This was a flagrant error on the part of the English; and they added to it, that of suffering him to proceed to the Isle of France. There his reputation had preceded him, and on his arrival, an english officer of equal rank, who happened to be a prisoner, was immediately released. This exchange freeing him from his parole, he was charged to put the colony into a state of defence; and he succeeded so well in this object, that the english company have not thought proper to risk against it any attempt.

Thus was preserved to the French an important settlement, that may serve, at some future period, as a point on which to assemble their forces, with the view of recovering their former possessions in India; an undertaking, however, of great difficulty, if at all possible, in the present state of their affairs, with no allies, nor a single port to support them on their land-

ing. The english company is a huge colossus, rendered by its size and weight not easy to be shaken; but this vast structure is raised upon ruins, and whoever builds upon such foundations should count that his fabric will eventually fall. Still, in the relative situation of the two nations, it may be expected, at least for some time, to triumph over all the efforts of France. Formidable by its forces, with no enemies and no rivals, possessing the sovereignty of all India, enriched by an immense commerce, but inclosing in its very bosom a radical defect, in a foreign population, this company will continue to advance, till, enfeebled by its splendour, and too unwieldy for its basis, it will be no longer able to support its prosperity, and will sink under its own weight. It will be the wisdom of France to content herself with sowing the seeds of division and independence among the tributary states of India, without attempting to use open force in the destruction of this empire. This is perhaps the only method by which she can succeed in rescuing this

Splendour of the english company.

part of the world from the dominion of her rival. She will reap indeed no immediate benefit from the change; but it is a maxim in politics, that every loss we occasion our enemy is so much gain to ourselves.

I have interrupted the narrative of my voyage, that I might place before the reader at once a regular view of the causes which produced the fall of the french power in India. I return to my original subject.

Possessions of the French.

I had promised an account of the french possessions on the coasts of the peninsula. I have mentioned Mahé, Karical, and Pondicherry; the remainder are the factories of Mazulipatam and Yanaon.

The former of these is a considerable town, in which the english company have a council under the presidency of Madras, the authority of which extends northward to the frontiers of the Four Sircars. The french government had retained, for

the purposes of commerce, a house, on which it was allowed the empty privilege of displaying its flag; but even this right was soon disputed, and finally abolished. Mazulipatam contains some manufactories of handkerchiefs which were formerly of importance, till those of Palliacata were removed to Madras, and established within the walls of that metropolis. They are, however, still in request for the excellence of their colouring. The neighbouring villages also, particularly Narpily, produce some which are held in estimation. The French participated in this branch of trade, by means of the commercial residence mentioned above; and the presence of an agent prevented a part of those obstacles and vexations to be expected by foreigners residing among rivals who are jealous of them.

Further northward, Yanaon, a small settlement within the limits of the english territory, was the centre, as I before observed, of the french commerce on the

coast of India. This was the last remnant of the acquisitions of the marquis de Bussy: this illustrious adventurer having in his youth undertaken on his own account the conquest of the empire of the Four Sircars, provinces of the kingdom of Golconda, did homage for it to the crown of France. This country, undergoing the fate of the rest of the french settlements, passed into the hands of the English, who from the ramparts of Visigapatam had command of it, and reduced to inactivity the dutch colony of Biblipatam, which lies contiguous to it. Yanaon and its territory, situated near the southern extremity of these provinces, was all that France could save at the peace; and even here the conquerors, before they left it, destroyed every thing that might hereafter offend their pride; and, in their usual spirit of vandalism, pulled down the house which had formerly belonged to the french company, because it excelled in magnificence that of the governor of Ingeram, the adjacent english settlement.

Yanaon.

With respect to the marquis of Bussy, he returned to Europe, where he lived forgotten amidst the honours which had been bestowed upon him, till the war of 1778, occasioning the want of a general to command in India, all eyes were suddenly turned upon him. The remembrance of the conquests of his earlier years was revived, his name alone was deemed to be a tower of strength, and he was eagerly sent to the scene of his former glory, again to display himself. But he was now unfortunately of an age ill suited to a renewal of such exploits. Arriving in India in the character of generalissimo of the french forces, his conduct had no other effect than to paralyse the exertions of troops, that, under a more active commander, would scarcely have waited patiently for the enemy within their entrenchments at Goudeleurs; and he terminated his career by a peaceable death at Pondicherry, leaving the brilliant achievements of his youth contrasted by the inertness of his old age. His countrymen

erected a monument to his memory in the church of the Capuchins in that town, which still attracts the veneration of those Indians who witnessed his early success.

Yanaon is advantageously situated at the confluence of the small river Coringui with the Godwarin. The mouth of the latter is obstructed by sand-banks, over which the sea never flows above six or seven feet even at the highest tides, and therefore cannot be entered by vessels drawing a greater depth of water; but by the assistance of an experienced pilot, a tolerably deep passage may be found among the numerous small channels by which the sand-banks are intersected. This river is deep within the bar, and is navigable to a great distance, though little frequented by vessels. Its borders are pleasant; and its course renders the prospect very picturesque. The stream is broad and rapid; at Yanaon it is stronger than that of the Garonne at Bourdeaux. I ascended it even beyond Cota; and the further I ad-

vanced, the wider and deeper I found it. Its interior navigation is trifling, as the Indians are too lazy to prosecute any thing that requires activity.

The Coringui is merely a rivulet formed by the Godwarin, and may be regarded as a mouth of it. It proceeds out of the Godwarin at Yanaon, and empties itself into the sea at a small place called Coringui, at the distance of about three leagues. It is augmented in its course by the waters of the district through which it passes. This country, which is scarcely above the level of the sea, is intersected by so many deep canals as to be wholly impassable. In descending the Coringui, the land to the left is a vast marsh, which, draining itself into the river, renders it of sufficient depth near its mouth to admit vessels of considerable burden. The English, who are masters of both banks, have quitted the left, to settle upon the right; and a great part of the natives having followed them, the old town consists now of three

or four huts only, round a pagoda that still preserves its ancient reputation. Different treaties have insured to the inhabitants of Yanaon the free navigation of this river, affording a communication with the road at its mouth. This is a great advantage in the conveyance of merchandise, which must otherwise have been sent by the Godwarin, with much danger and loss of time.

The village of Yanaon, with the territory belonging to it, and a small island situated to the south, forms a space of about a league and a half square. This space contains a population of six thousand Indians, and is the last of the french possessions on this coast. We have now taken a survey of them all: the list is not long; and it may readily be seen how greatly the power and influence of that nation are reduced in this part of the globe. This is the result of a bad system, and of obstinacy in the pursuit of ill-conceived plans. The grand projects of Dupleix would have led

Errors of the French.

to glory and to fortune; but these were neglected and despised, while the sovereign was led into error by the ignorance and infatuation of those of his court who were intrusted with the management of the affairs of India. So little were the interests of France in Asia an object of attention at Versailles, that in the framing the treaty of peace of 1783, no person was consulted who was acquainted with our possessions in that quarter. This is evident from the treaty itself, which contains precisely the same condition with regard to India, and nearly in the same words, as that of the preceding peace; though the superiority which Mr. de Suffrein had acquired gave us the power of recovering all our former losses. A glaring proof of the ignorance of the authors of this treaty, on the part of France, respecting even the geography of the country, on the destination of which they were to decide, is, that they confounded the village of Vilnour with that of Valdaour.

The one has a very considerable, the other a very narrow, territory, and, while intending to retain the greater, they stipulated for the less. This mistake, which has deprived us of an extent of land equal to all that we now retain on the coast, is one of the least errors committed on that occasion. We might have insisted upon the whole country to the south of the peninsula, as far as Pondicherry, that is to say, all the places which the English possess there, and which would have given us the same influence over the princes of those small states, as is now exercised by them; whereas we scarcely acquired in the whole a district of twelve leagues square. All our measures on this subject have been ill chosen; while England, on the contrary, taking advantage of our errors, adopting the wise and prudent system which we abandoned, and opposing patience and perseverance to the petulance of the conductors of our affairs, who were eager to reap the harvest when

the seed was scarcely sown, has carried the splendour of its indian colonies to a height unexampled in the history of the world.

I have thus given a summary account of the decline of the french power in the peninsula of India, without concealing the causes which led to that event. Unhappily, this is not the last reverse of our fortunes which my pen will have to retrace: I shall have occasion hereafter to take a view of Bengal, where it will be seen, that the interests of France were managed neither with more ability, nor more success.

Departure from Pondicherry.

Having finished my business at Pondicherry, I left that place for Bengal. As I had broken one cable at the Sechelles, and another at Pondicherry, it was necessary to provide myself with a new one, to encounter the tides of the Ganges. I could find, however, at this last place neither cable, nor the materials for making one,

nor workmen. Madras was the nearest port at which I could furnish myself, and I accordingly determined to take that place in my way, for the purpose.

Madras. This town is one of the three capitals of the English in India. The authority of the council established there extends over all the possessions of the company on the peninsula, eastward of the Gauts; but it is subordinate to that of Calcutta, the residence of the governor-general.

Madras, properly so called, is a very large town, surrounded by a ditch, and a sort of wall, falling in some places into ruins, but sufficient to resist a surprise, or a sudden attack of cavalry, which is no small advantage; for in war the light cavalry of the natives, called *louti*, are the most audacious freebooters in the world, burning and plundering indiscriminately every place that falls in their way. Madras is thus protected from their attacks;

and, in case of siege, every thing of value is removed into the citadel, called Fort St. George.

Fort St. George.

This fortress, which I examined but very imperfectly, is separated from the town by an esplanade outside the glacis: it stands on the sea-shore, and presents six fronts towards the land, as well as I can recollect, for my notes do not mention this particular. The fort, having been built at several times, is of a very irregular construction; not in regard to the polygon, but in the plan of the fronts, which are almost all different from each other. That towards the north-east is on the italian model of Sardi. Its opposite, on the south-west, is according to the plan of the chevalier De Ville. Some of the bastions have retired flanks, and others not: the flanks of the northern bastions are casemated. This side is defended by a strong counterguard; the ditches are excellent, with a cunette in the middle; the counter-way is good, and is counter-mined, but I do not

know whether the chambers of the mines extend beyond the summit of the glacis, nor how far the galleries are carried; and in the ditches there are neither caponiers nor tenailles. All the works are well-faced with brick, and in complete repair; the covered way is palisaded, and carefully provided with traverses; the barriers and palisadoes are well closed and kept in good condition; the depôts of arms are spacious; and the citadel of Madras, with a good garrison, might hold out in Europe against an army of 30,000 men, for twenty days after the trenches were opened. As this fortress is intended, in case of siege, for the retreat of all the servants of the company, it is necessarily filled with houses; which gives it a dark and unpleasant appearance. On this account the English do not reside in it; even the governor lives in the country, and the rest of the English follow his example. They repair in the morning to the fort for the transaction of business, and remain there till three o'clock in the after-

noon, when they return, and the place seems deserted. Even the theatre is in the country; so that the ground to a considerable distance round Madras presents to the view a multitude of gardens, spread over an extent so great, as to prevent persons who reside at the opposite extremities from visiting each other, unless on horseback or in carriages; the palanquins in many instances would be insufficient for the purpose. Some of these gardens are extremely beautiful, and the houses are in general elegant.

The position of Fort St. George is equally fortunate with that of Pondicherry, and is in like manner strengthened on the south side by a river, that washes the extremity of the glacis. Over this river is a handsome bridge of bricks. The west side is protected by an inundation, which the fort can at any time command, by means of a sluice situated at the beginning of the glacis, and defended by the covered

way. The northern side, as at Pondicherry, is the only side open to an attack.

The power of the English in this country, however, was not always supported by so formidable a bulwark. The present fortress indeed is impregnable to the Indians; but the sight of the old fort will give an idea of the feebleness of the first establishments on the coast, and of the slender beginnings from which the English rose to their present greatness.

Old fort.

This was a square building, which is now in the middle of the fort, and in point of size is not equal even to the present depôt of arms. It has been converted into a house, in which the different offices of the company are established. Fort St. George contains a church of the english persuasion: no other religion indeed is tolerated in the citadel. An elegant structure too has lately been erected, intended for an exchange. The great hall, decorated with

portraits of lord Cornwallis and general Meadows, is worthy the attention of travellers. Madras is already numbered in the list of places celebrated for the sumptuousness of their public establishments. The posts for the conveyance of letters, called *tapal,* are well managed; while two newspapers, a national lottery, a theatre, and a ball-room, raise it to a rivalry with those towns, which are the scenes of luxury and refinement.

The Black Town is what is probably called Madras, and even the Indians still give it the name of Madras-Patnam. This addition of patnam or patam is applicable only to capital towns, though some of very inferior rank still retain it: which is owing to such places having declined from their ancient splendour, or to the name having been applied by the Indians at a time when they were accustomed to behold nothing superior. The Black Town exhibits only a spectacle of filth and dirt;

none of the streets are either paved, or even covered with sand, but have a soil of black earth, which, mixing with the water, forms large collections of stinking mud, that engender infection, and allow a free passage only to carriages.

The Indians have a vehicle of this kind that is peculiar to themselves, and which, in my account of their machines, I forgot to mention. Much praise indeed is not due for the invention: it exhibits a whimsical and awkward appearance; the wheels are extremely low, and upon the axle-tree are laid two beams, forming a small cross, to the extremities of which are fixed four upright posts, supporting an extravagantly large head or canopy. This little nook, as it may be called, is entirely open on three of the sides, and inclosed behind only with a piece of cloth: it will scarcely admit two persons, but one may be tolerably at ease, by the help of cushions, upon which he is obliged to sit with his

legs bent under him. The carriage is drawn by two oxen abreast, and has a number of small bells fastened to it. It is seldom used in towns; but the rich and superior class of the natives employ it in their journeys to different parts of the country.

The black population of Madras is very considerable, exceeding even that of Pondicherry. There are several pagodas in the town, some mosques, an armenian church, and a portuguese one, of which the service is performed by Capuchins. These monks are subject to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of St. Thomas, a small village at the distance of a league southward of Fort St. George; and both this prelate and the bishop of Pondicherry, who belongs to the mission of the french Jesuits, are suffragans of the bishop of Goa. The present bishop of St. Thomas is a negro, or at least is descended from an indian family allied to a portuguese; he was born in the country, and is of a mulatto colour.

Missionaries.

The preference which the metropolitan bishop of Goa, who is himself a Portuguese, thus exclusively shows to the priests of every description who are connected with his own countrymen, has had the effect of introducing into the religious rites of that mission all the mummery of the indian idolatry. It is only among the french Jesuits, and in the parochial church of Pondicherry, that the catholic religion is practised with the decorum due to it; the other churches exhibit only a species of burlesque entertainments. This has perhaps arisen from an idea of making religious impressions upon the Indians through the medium of external objects; but I did not observe that the Jesuits, who have not departed from the simplicity and decency observed in the european worship, are less successful in making proselytes, than those who have most eagerly given into these extravagances. I happened to be at Madras in passion-week, and was disgusted at seeing the majestic and awful solemnities prescribed on

this occasion, degraded by ridiculous farces. The tragedy of the death of Jesus Christ, and his descent from the cross, was performed in the church. The latter incident was represented by men in the turkish dress, who ascended ladders, and brought down the figure of a corpse, well executed in point of sculpture, and of which the joints being moveable, and their bend natural, the effect was so strong upon the women who were present, that I perceived some of them to faint. The Blacks then accompanied the corpse to the grave, amidst the noise of the same instruments as the Indians use at their pagodas and in their processions; thus reducing the ceremonies of our holy religion to a level with the absurdities of idolaters.

Though the number of english inhabitants in the presidency of Madras be great, they are all included in three classes; the military, the merchants, and those in civil employments under the company; but the bulk of the population consists

of Blacks: there are no european labourers. An individual of the profession of the law, endowed with an active and enterprising mind, a diligence not to be discouraged, and a perseverance that might be mistaken for obstinacy; a man, in short, formed for the accomplishment of great undertakings, if properly supported—the late Mr. Popham; is the first, and hitherto the only person, who has attempted the establishment of a plantation in this country. Of all the productions of the soil, the cultivation of cotton appeared to him best suited to the natural indolence of the Indians, the labour it exacts requiring more attention than vigour. With these views, he formed, with much trouble and expense, a considerable plantation two leagues to the north of Madras; but with all his arrangements, and the pains he employed to provide a supply of water for the soil, his establishment in the year 1794 had not repaid him even the sums which he had laid out upon it. Should his example, however, be followed, his successors, avoiding

his faults, and finding the Blacks a little more habituated to labour, may embark in a similar speculation with less expense, and make it turn to better account. Whether it arose from any defect in the methods pursued by Mr. Popham, or from the nature of the ground he had chosen, I am unable to say; but his plants were weak, and the cotton meagre and short. It is not probable, however, that in a project like this he will meet with imitators, those who have money finding it more profitable and less troublesome to employ it in the manufactures of the country. It would likewise be exposed to a serious disadvantage from a competition with the Blacks, who, obtaining their cotton with infinitely less trouble, leaving it to the spontaneous operation of nature, and being freed besides by their habits from superfluous wants, and having made no advances for which they look for return, would always be able to sell it at an inferior price. There was another defect in the cotton produced in this way, which

was not only short in itself, but rendered more so by cleaning it in the mill. As labour is so cheap in this country, it would be much more advisable to have the cotton picked by the hand, as it would thus not be broken by the action of the cylinder, and would be consequently in better condition for spinning.

Spinning of cotton.

The skill of the Indians in the article of spinning is well known; the delicate textures with which they furnish us are a proof of it. Some cotton is spun so exquisitely fine, that the force of the air alone is sufficient to break it; in this case it is worked over the steam of boiling water, which, by moistening the cotton, renders it more ductile, and less liable to break, than when it is dry.

Struck with admiration of their dexterity in these arts, Mr. de Suffrein conceived and executed the design of removing several families of them to Malta, to form a colony which might instruct the natives of

that island in the manufactures of India. This enterprise, however, did not answer the end that was expected: the unhappy subjects of it, finding themselves in a foreign land, among a people with whose manners and customs they were wholly unacquainted, lost every thought but that of returning to their country, and left in their new settlement scarcely a vestige of their transitory abode.

At Madras very handsome handkerchiefs of a large checked pattern, excellent in the colouring, and of a peculiar fineness, are fabricated. Manufactories for this article were originally established by the Dutch, at a small settlement which they possess four leagues further northward, called *Palliacata*. The beauty of these handkerchiefs soon bringing them into repute, and rendering them objects of general request, the English erected similar manufactories at Madras; but the former retained their superiority, and were universally preferred. Impa- Handkerchiefs.

tient of a rival in any undertaking, the English spared neither pains nor expense in this competition, and by dint of their exertions were able at last to give to their handkerchiefs a degree of beauty and excellence scarcely inferior to those of Palliacata. Not satisfied with attaining this point, they resolved on the destruction of the original manufactories; and, in the means they employed for the accomplishment of their end, the pre-eminence of their commercial genius was manifest. With an unanimity, the result of a refined policy, and understanding the art of incurring a temporary loss, that would be attended with an indemnification in the sequel, they suddenly lowered the price of their handkerchiefs twenty per cent. This measure immediately turned the balance of trade in their favour. The Dutch, supposing their rivals to make this reduction in consequence of improvements or economy in the mode of manufacturing the article, or by an establishment on a greater scale, or perhaps by ob-

taining on better terms the raw materials, made every effort to do the same; but they found a loss where they supposed their rivals to have a profit, and were obliged at last to abandon the attempt altogether, without so much as suspecting the artifice by which they had been duped. The workmen, who were thus thrown out of employ, were immediately engaged by the successful party at Madras, who no sooner found themselves the sole masters of this valuable branch of commerce, than they gradually raised the price of the handkerchiefs, so as liberally to repay them for the momentary loss to which they had submitted.

Since this reverse of fortune, Palliacata, which had acquired a degree of animation, has been reduced to a state of complete inactivity: a single vessel only goes there once a year for some bales of merchandise, which the dutch company orders to be provided, and which constitutes the whole commerce of the district.

The approaches to Madras are uncommonly magnificent, particularly the great road to the west of Fort St. George: the avenues, planted with four rows of trees, majestically announce the residence of no inferior power. A stranger, in entering by this road, conceives the most exalted ideas of the place; but they are soon changed when he arrives at his inn, if this name may be given to two miserable huts in the Black Town, and a house scarcely superior to them in the fort. These inns can furnish no better accommodation than a vile bed, placed upon a couch or a form in a large room, in which the guests are obliged to lie indiscriminately together, after the table is removed on which they have supped.

Inns.

Trade.

The trade of Madras is still more completely in the hands of the Blacks than that of Pondicherry, the concerns being more extensive and more lucrative, and the sales more brisk. The european merchant entirely neglects the minute details,

and looks only at the abstract of the accounts given him by his dobachi: a negligence perfectly suited to the manner in which he lives, at a distance from the spot where his affairs are conducted, which he visits only once a-day, and that not regularly, to bestow upon them two or three hours' attention.

Nabob of the Carnatic.

The english company calls itself the ally and protector of the nabob of the Carnatic. It has built for him a magnificent palace at a short distance from Fort St. George, where it retains him in its power, and dictates to him its will, concealing the gilt fetters in which he is held by the honour with which it invests him. The semblance of authority is still preserved to this prince, the laws which the company imposes upon his subjects being promulgated in his name; while his real weakness is such as renders it impossible to free himself from the yoke under which he bends. Like another Montezuma, obliged to kiss the hand that op-

presses him, he is merely an instrument to serve the purpose of the company as to the Indians, whom a sentiment of respect for the person of their prince retains in their allegiance. The English are the real monarchs, and reign in the room of the nabob, whom they compensate for this state of degradation, with the vain exterior of a mock sovereignty, which he displays at Madras in an english equipage: a luxury new in an asiatic prince, and which he has bought at the expense of his crown.

Navigation.

The navigation of the Indians is still very defective. That their ships are bad is not from the want of excellent materials. The *teak* wood grows in abundance, and is equal to the oak of Europe. Their vessels are awkward in their form, and are put together with little solidity: they are scarcely even caulked; and if they were not coated with a composition made for this purpose, some of them would not be able to float. This substance is a mixture

of lime and fish-oil; it adheres so closely to the planks of the ship, that it fills all the crevices, and effectually prevents the water from penetrating. It is called by the Indians *galgat*.

They have another preparation, called *sarangousti*, which they spread over the heads of the nails and joints of the timbers. It is made of dry pitch and fish-oil, which are beaten together till the mixture assumes the consistency of a soft paste; in this state it is applied, and it gives such extraordinary hardness as to turn the edge of the best tempered instruments. These two compositions cannot be too strongly recommended to european mariners.

The indian vessels are called *parias*. If their hull be defective, the manner of rigging them is not less so. The masts are of teak, and are extremely heavy; the ropes are of cocoa-hair, which they call *kaire*; and they have few blocks and sails. Accordingly, though some of the Marine.

vessels are so large as to amount even to six hundred tons, they are only adapted for short voyages, which they accomplish with the aid of the monsoons. They are sufficiently numerous to perform the whole carrying business between the coast and Bengal. Their usual cargo is salt and rice. The greater navigation, from coast to coast, is made by vessels of european construction.

Exclusively of the maritime trade between the coasts of India and that to China, the english merchants engage in smuggling adventures to the Moluccas. The profit of this trade is immense, and is proportioned to the dangers that are risked. The ships employed in the voyage must be able to contend with a dutch sloop of eighteen guns, stationed as a guard-ship off those islands. On approaching the coast, the inhabitants, who are accustomed to this traffic, bring by stealth to the vessel under sail the spices which they have to dispose of, and which they barter at a very low rate. As no satisfac-

tion could be obtained for any outrage they might attempt, and no application could be made to the dutch company for redress, the crews of the vessels employed in this trade never treat with the natives without being armed.

The geography of the peninsula experiences so many variations, from the successive conquests and usurpations which are continually altering the boundaries of the different states, that it cannot be determined with any certainty; a correct account of it now would no longer be so a year hence. We may venture, however, to divide the country into provinces; of which the chief are Trevancore, the Deccan, the Carnatic with Arcot, Madura, Tanjore, Mysore, Golconda, Bisnagar, the Four Sircars, and the territory of the Mahrattas. All these provinces were formerly dependent governments under the Mogul Empire, each having its nabob, and subah. But these viceroys, inspired with presumption and the assurance of im-

Geography.

Provinces.

punity from the want of energy in the court of Delhi, conceived the project of rendering themselves independent. The imbecility of the reigning emperor completed their success. Many of them, become sovereigns, disdained the title of nabob, and assumed that of sultan or king, which was more flattering to their pride. The governor of Golconda alone has retained his former title of nizam. Hyder Ally at first contented himself with that of khan; his son Tippoo, when he met his destruction, had that of sultan; the heads of the provinces of Trevancore and Tanjore have taken the title of king. The mogul emperor however still preserves an ideal dominion over these princes, but it consists merely in some exterior marks of respect which they pay to him, and some warrants which they occasionally solicit, to sanction their successive usurpations, in the same manner as the european powers were used to apply to the see of Rome for bulls, to convey to them an investiture of new possessions. The emperor, who has lost

all his real authority, never rejects such opportunities of performing an act of sovereignty, and always complies with their will.

Among the provinces which thus threw off the yoke of this monarch, the Mahrattas are the only people who, acting upon principles of independence, have abjured the authority of a master. They have accordingly established in the north-west quarter of the peninsula a formidable republic. They have a numerous cavalry, and their influence in the affairs of India, since one of their chiefs, a man of high reputation, filled the post of prime minister to the emperor, has greatly increased. This officer is known by the name of *Sandjah*, which he has rendered famous. His credit at the court of Delhi was the greater, from the extreme incapacity of the emperor. The power of the sovereign was equalled by that of the minister, who, constant in his attachment to his country, forwarded its interests with

Mahrattas.

his master, and brought him to approve of its revolt. The alliance of this republic is of the greatest importance in the political system of India; and the English accordingly spare no efforts or sacrifices to obtain it. It is to the faithful attachment of the Mahrattas, who joined their forces to those of the company, that lord Cornwallis is indebted for his victories over Tippoo. That prince, believing himself sufficiently powerful to conquer alone, disdained to ask for their assistance; not foreseeing that such a neglect would give him one more enemy to contend with. The junction of the Mahratta army turned the tide of conquest to the side of the English, who had before been repulsed from Seringapatam with loss, and induced the necessity of that disadvantageous peace, which was the prelude to the total ruin of Tippoo.

Departure for Bengal.

After staying some days at Madras, I sailed for Bengal. In the bay of Basore, I was opposed by mists and rain, accom-

panied with a calm, which forced me to anchor in twelve-fathom water. As the coast is extremely low, the bottom rises so gradually, that a depth of ten or twelve fathom in the bay is at least twelve leagues from the entrance of the river; between which and the beginning of the flats, it rises but three fathom. The pilots go no further out than to the depth of ten fathom, as beyond this there is no danger. They were still therefore at a great distance from me; and, though I fired repeated signals, none of them came. On the second day, the weather having cleared up a little, I bent my sails, and steered to the northward, but not without great anxiety respecting the shoals, with which the mouth of this river abounds, and with the situation of which I was so little acquainted, that, long before I was near them, I was every instant apprehensive of striking. I at last found the pilots at the beginning of the shallows, about half a league from the first buoy. These shallows are formed by sand-banks, which project from the Shallows.

mouth of the river to a great distance into the sea. They are the more dangerous, as there is nothing to indicate their approach, and no land in sight to afford any observations for avoiding them: it is necessary to sound carefully every half-minute, and even this would be insufficient in sailing with a favourable wind and tide, as the vessel would be aground before the line could announce the danger. To prevent accidents of this sort, buoys are placed at regular distances in the track of the channels, which the rapid stream of the Ganges has formed in these banks: the buoys mark the course which the pilots should keep. The same expedient is adopted in the river Elbe in Germany, the mouth of which presents nearly the same difficulties.

The river, upon the banks of which the european settlements in Bengal are situated, is not the Ganges, and is therefore very improperly called by that name; it is the river Hoogly, so denominated from

the small indian village which first contributed to render it important. It takes its rise in the Ganges, and may thus be strictly considered as an inferior branch of that river, the principal bed of which runs to the eastward of the Hoogly, and empties itself into the sea by numerous mouths near Chaligam.

The Hoogly is extremely wide at its entrance: in ascending it, the land is not seen till we have advanced a considerable distance; the banks of the river first appear in sight at Cadjery. The distance between them at the end of the shallows is very great: indeed, when we arrive at this point, we are still in the main, and the pilots, who are stationed there to take charge of the ships that arrive, are provided with vessels capable of encountering the violence of a tempest and a heavy swell: they are stout brigs, and are calculated for every sort of manœuvre. The english company had six of these ships on an old construction, and has added six Pilot-brigs.

others, built at Bombay. These last are sloops of sixteen guns, and are capable of serving on occasions as ships of war. Thus the English have twelve pilot-vessels; and, before the war, the French and Dutch had one each. These vessels lie at anchor at the outer extremity of the shallows. As soon as they are perceived, the ship that arrives fires a gun, and hangs out a flag at the head of her foretop-gallant mast, when one of them gets under way to meet her. If she proves to be only a small vessel, whose draught of water is not so considerable as to require much skill in bringing her in, one of the officers of the pilot-brig takes charge of her, and the superior returns to his station. But if it is a ship of such burden as to demand the attention of the master-pilot, he goes on board of her himself, his brig sailing before to point out the track and communicate the soundings, which is done in the day-time by flags, and in the night by lights. These precautions are all indispensable, and, though a multitude of ac-

cidents are prevented, they are not always sufficient wholly to guard against them. The tides of the Ganges are prodigiously rapid. The channels, which the stream of this river has formed in the sand-banks at its mouth, are in some places not more than half a league wide. In entering them during the south-west monsoon, the force of the wind and tide together will carry a vessel at the rate of six leagues an hour; in this state a single false stroke of the helm will throw her too much to one side, and, by losing the exact direction of the channel, expose her to the greatest danger, often to the inevitable fate of being wrecked. With the north-east monsoon, on the other hand, the entrance of the river is more tedious and more laborious, but less dangerous. As the wind in this case is always contrary, it is necessary in these channels to tack continually; of consequence, vessels sailing across can make but little way, and the tide carries them to

their destination. In executing this manœuvre little skill is required in the pilot; it is merely necessary to put about, whenever the lead announces four fathom and a half of water. The depth of seven fathom denotes the middle of the channel. By continuing this method from side to side, the object is finally attained without much risk.

Our approach to Cadjery, which is on the left bank of the river, may be known by a house, standing on an eminence, belonging to the english company, which keeps a resident there. From this place is seen the point called, from the nature of its shore, *Mud-point*, on the opposite bank. This point forms the southern extremity of the woods of Sondry, famous for the enormous size of the tigers which are found there, and with which they are filled. This species is the *royal tiger, or tiger properly so called*, of Buffon. These animals are extremely formidable by their

strength and activity. Some of them are as large as oxen. Their coat is variegated with stripes of reddish yellow and black, and is whitish under the belly. They are so eager and ferocious in pursuit of their prey, that they have been known to throw themselves into the water, and swim to attack boats on the river.

It is customary in passing Cadjery to hire boats with oars to facilitate the principal manœuvres necessary in proceeding up the river. Mine being a heavy ship, I employed twelve of these, which accompanied me as far as the roadstead opposite these woods; where, while I was at anchor, they fastened themselves to my vessel behind, as if, in the sea phrase, they were in tow. So many boats presenting a considerable resistance to the tide, and acting with violence upon my cable, the pilot ordered them to leave me, and to range themselves along the side of the river, till, the current being abated, he should call them. Tigers.

When they had repaired to this new position, they unfortunately perceived on the shore a quantity of dry wood, consisting of branches of dead trees. As this is an article of sale at Calcutta, they landed to cut some of it and load their boats. They were at the distance of about three hundred yards from the vessel, and had scarcely begun their work when we saw them running to the water-side with the strongest marks of terror. This was not without cause, they were pursued by a tiger, of the size of a common calf: we saw it rush out of the wood, and seize upon the hindmost of these men, whom it carried off in an instant, without meeting with the slightest opposition from the unfortunate being himself, or his companions. The brother alone of the victim appeared afflicted at the event, and did not again leave his boat; but the rest immediately returned to their employment on shore, persuaded that the tiger was satisfied, and that there was now no danger: this is their general belief.

Notwithstanding the superiority which these creatures possess over human beings by their strength, ferocity, and the arms with which nature has supplied them, a certain instinct seems to tell them, that men by their intellectual faculties are still more formidable than they: hence they avoid inhabited and cultivated places; or if they sometimes visit them, it is only when compelled by hunger. In ascending the river Hoogly, the village of Coulpy is the last settlement of the Indians on the right bank, and the tigers seldom appear so far up. But between this place and the Clive-islands they are so numerous, that they are sometimes seen in troops on the banks. These islands have been lately brought into a state of improvement for the cultivation of sugar. The clearing of the ground was attended with the loss of a great number of Indians, who were destroyed by these ferocious animals; for, in cutting down the wood with which the face of the country was covered, they were dis-

turbed in their retreats, and rushed upon the labourers. What will appear extraordinary, these men never attempted to defend themselves, though their number sometimes amounted to five hundred. They believed, that the tiger would be satisfied with carrying off one, and would then cease to appear: of consequence, whenever they perceived one approaching, they ran off in disorder, every one making the best of his way, and trusting to the swiftness of his flight, leaving the slowest to be seized and carried off; after which they returned to their work. This scene was repeated every day without increasing the courage of the Blacks; and these continual ravages would not have been attended with the destruction of one of these monsters, if they had not at last been opposed by a few europeans, who superintended the works, and were well armed. They have now wholly deserted these islands, which no longer afford them a retreat, and have settled on the continent, and augmented

the number of those which infest the woods of Sondry.

Continuing to ascend the river, we arrive at Coulpy, or Port-Diamond, as it is called by the English, who have provided here *cormors* for their ships; these are large anchors fixed in the ground, to which their vessels are fastened with more security than by their proper moorings. Ganges.

The english government has in this place port-officers, a large bakehouse, a shambles, and hospitals for its marine. A market is held here, in which the crews of vessels may find in abundance every refreshment which the country produces.

Above this port the bed of the river turns to the left, leaving to the right a very dangerous sand-bank. At a short distance further is the mouth of a large river, improperly called the Old Ganges. It is not till we pass the confluence of these waters, that the borders of the

Hoogly begin to be picturesque. Its immense width is here reduced to that of an ordinary large river, and affords the pleasant prospect of both banks.

A little higher on the right is Fulta, a dutch possession, accustomed formerly, in the prosperous days of that company, to receive ships of considerable burden; but reduced now to so low a state, as to see only a single galliot, sent annually to take in some bales of goods, prepared in the settlement of Chinsura. This galliot is sometimes accompanied by a smaller vessel; and this forms at present the whole extent of the dutch commerce in Bengal.

The establishment on shore consists of two houses; of which one is an inn, built partly of bricks, and the other the residence of the commandant. This officer is a negro, charged by the company with the care of displaying their flag on a tree, in the manner of a mast. This house is

still less splendid than the inn, for it is constructed entirely of straw. The indian town however is very considerable, and has a bazar, which is well supplied. This small settlement resembles, in one point, all the colonies belonging to the Dutch on the Ganges; that of being the scene of the most unrestrained debauchery. This perfectly suits the disposition of the sailors, who here recruit the number of unhappy females that go to Port-Diamond to administer to the pleasure of the english crews, which are numerous, to contribute to fill their hospitals, and often to leave their lovers sad tokens of remembrance during their life.

My pilot having anchored near this village, I was desirous of going on shore to take a walk; but, as the current was too strong for me to reach the town, I landed in an adjacent meadow. The first thing that met my view was a pangolin, which I pursued to the entrance of its retreat, when I made a stroke at it with my

sword, which broke between two of the scales.

I then proceeded towards the village, passing through a very thick wood, across which was a path about three feet wide. I was preceded by a pion, and followed by two boys, whom the sircar of one of my friends, who had expected my arrival, had sent to meet me. To my surprise the pion suddenly made a long leap, and ran off as fast as he could: I advanced to learn the cause, and was equally terrified myself on seeing an enormous serpent, that lay stretched across the path in which I was walking.. Its length was so immense, that I could see neither its head nor its tail, which were concealed in the bushes. Its colour was brown; it crept very slowly along, and appeared to be of the size of an eighteen-inch cable; that is to say, as nearly as I could judge, about eighteen inches in circumference. I followed the example of my soldier, and, without affecting a courage, which

would have been the more ill-timed, as my sword, at best but a sorry weapon in such extremity, was already broken, jumped over this monster, and proceeded with a little more alertness than the usual pace. The two boys behind me, alarmed at seeing a pion fly, and even an european follow him with tolerable quickness, ran back, and did not rejoin me till the next day on board my vessel.

After ascending some leagues higher on the river, we find on the right bank the anchoring ground of Mayapour. This place was formerly to the French, what Fulta was to the Dutch: it was the road where such vessels of the french company stopped, that were unable to proceed to Chandernagore for want of the necessary depth of water. This place also has undergone the same fate as Fulta, in proportion as the affairs of France have declined in this quarter. It is at present even in a worse condition than that village; for it has now no european houses,

and no flag; a few huts and a miserable bazar scarcely bear testimony to its former existence. No traces recal the idea of the commerce of this place during the splendour of the french company; a striking example of the vicissitudes of human institutions! Mayapour was a port of extensive trade; and vessels of fifteen hundred tons burden frequented its road in great numbers, dispensing abundance and luxury, when Port-Diamond did not as yet exist. At present, the latter is flourishing, while the former is deserted, and offers nothing but its name to remind the traveller of its ancient opulence: the common destiny of all the french establishments, which a constant succession of adverse events has condemned to oblivion.

At last, after proceeding a few leagues above Mayapour, the gardens and sumptuous palaces, which meet the eye, announce our approach to the capital of the East, the metropolis of the english empire in Asia, and the finest colony in the world.

The magnificence of the edifices, the luxury which has converted the banks of the river into delightful gardens, and the costliness and elegance of their decorations, all denote the opulence and power of the conquerors of India and the masters of the Ganges.

The windings of this river conceal in some degree the town of Calcutta, which we do not perceive till we are within a short distance of it. Fort-William, the finest fortress that exists out of Europe, presents itself immediately to the sight, which it astonishes by its grandeur and the splendour of the buildings, that are seen above its ramparts. The houses, which form the first front of the tower to the end of the glacis, are so many magnificent palaces, some of them having a peristyle of four-and-twenty pillars. All these structures, disposed in an irregular line through a space of more than a league, form an inconceivably striking prospect, and give to the town a most noble and majestic appearance. Calcutta.

Calcutta is the only european settlement of any importance on this bank of the Ganges: the other nations have fixed upon the left side, while the English alone have preferred the right. Whatever were the causes of this preference, the situation is ill-chosen. The ground is not sufficiently raised above the level of the river, and frequently, in the high tides, the esplanade which separates the citadel from the town, if not totally inundated, is at least covered with water in different parts so as to be impassable.

The air of Calcutta is by no means healthy, its position between the river and a large lake in its rear subjecting it to the influence of unwholesome exhalations: but the european inhabitants remedy this defect by living in the country. There is however one inconvenience that cannot be remedied, which is the situation of its port. This stands exactly at the turn of two points, which augment the violence of the current in every state

of the tide. The bar is frequently here of sufficient strength to drive the vessels from their moorings. The currents being extremely violent, particularly in July and August, the time of the melting of the snow on the mountains in the interior parts of the country, the first effect of the flood-tide at these periods is, not only to stop the course of the river, but to surmount it with so much force as to require a rapid course of its own. Bengal lies so low, that when the sea, increased by these torrents, rushes in this manner into the bed of the river, its violence is irresistible. The ebb current, meeting a similar obstacle, has at first a tendency to raise itself, but the flood being impelled with a superior force, gains the ascendency and passes over it. From this shock results a very heavy and foaming surge, which the tide pushes before it with a prodigious rapidity, to the imminent danger of every boat that is not prudent enough to keep out of its way.

This bar has never its full effect, but on one side of the river at a time; and the mischief it occasions may be avoided by taking the side on which it is weakest, which may easily be perceived. Every salient angle in the windings of the river, presenting an obstacle to its progress, throws it towards the contrary bank, and it continues thus till repelled by another projection, which turns it again. The Indians flock to the borders of the river, impatient to wet themselves with the water, which they believe to be salutary, and which they sprinkle over their bodies with devotion, uttering as they do it exclamations of joy.

Calcutta is situated so as to receive the whole force of the bar, which sometimes, and especially in the spring-tides, is very great. To render this anchorage as wretched as possible, it is interspersed with numerous sand-banks, even opposite to the fort and the town. The necessary opera-

tions of the port are thus checked; and when the depth of the river is reduced by the ebb, its course, obstructed by these impediments, increases in rapidity, and occasions innumerable accidents, such as destruction of boats, damage of vessels, loss of anchors, &c.

I was witness to an instance of this sort, which put the whole anchorage into confusion. The parias, which are generally numerous, moor themselves above the european ships, opposite the Black Town. They are usually fastened together, and thus present to the current a long line of vessels, of which the cables act together. This practice is not unaccompanied with risk, but it prevents the vessels from yawing, that is, swinging from one side to the other, tracing an arc of a circle, of which the anchor is the centre, and the cable the radius. This motion renders the strain upon the cable unequal, often drags the anchor, and is the occasion, when any other vessel is within the

extent of the arc thus described, of very serious mischief. In this view therefore the practice of fastening these vessels together is of advantage. But unfortunately, at the time of which I speak, the cable of one of the parias, at the extremity of the line, parted, and the vessel immediately fell athwart the horse of the next. Their cables are generally good, but their anchors are abominable: that of the second paria gave way, and two were thus adrift. The rest followed in succession, and in a quarter of an hour they were all in disorder, to the number of a hundred and fifty at least. In this condition they could make no effectual resistance to the current, and were driven forcibly against the nearest european ships at anchor behind them. The crews of these ships encountered them with hatchets, cutting and damaging in every way such as fastened on them: the number however was too great; the tide threw them athwart horse of those that were moored, thus carrying away their bowsprits, while the anchors

and cables, unequal to such an exertion, also gave way. The whole was now a scene of disorder: the ships mixed with the parias, and nothing was heard but the noise of masts and yards breaking. Some had the precaution to run aground, others continued to increase the confusion, from which few succeeded in escaping entirely. The direction of the tide exempted such only as were out of the stream; all the rest shared in the danger. Let the reader figure to himself nearly three hundred vessels turned suddenly adrift, endeavouring to grapple with each other, and carried away at the same time by the current with a rapidity that was sure to be the destruction of all such as should strike upon the sand-banks; let him add to this, the cries, oaths, imprecations, and blasphemies of the crews of so many nations, speaking different languages, without understanding each other, and he will have a faint idea of the scene that was then before me. Had the vessels that were driven from their moorings thrown

out the anchors which they had still on board, they would all inevitably have been lost; but they had the wisdom to retain them till they were clear of their companions; and, as soon as they found themselves free, they anchored wherever they could till the return of the tide, or assistance should be sent from the port. I happened to be on board my vessel at the beginning of the confusion. I was at anchor in the middle of the river, and nearly in the centre of the harbour, in a situation in which I could not possibly have avoided the general fate, had not a circumstance luckily determined me upon taking measures to withdraw from the peril, which I perceived approaching. A large english ship, removing from the crowd, compelled me to the only step that could possibly have saved me; for it came towards me with so much rapidity, that I had scarcely time to cut my cable with an axe, to prevent a rencontre that might have proved fatal to us both. I suffered my vessel to drift, without anchoring again

till I got below the citadel, to a distance of a mile and a half. Here I moored with two anchors, and remained in safety till order was re-established at Calcutta, when I returned to my station.

An accident of this kind is the most fortunate event that can happen for the officers of the port. They first sell, either of themselves, or by means of their Blacks, the anchors that may be wanted, and then take a declaration from each captain, specifying those which he has lost, their weight and marks, a description of the ends of the cables which are fastened to them, the spot near which they may be expected to be found, and in short every particular that may assist in their recovery. This declaration is formally registered, and the captains hear no more of the matter.

I lost five in the course of three weeks; and I did not fail, as to the first two, to make the declarations which were required. Each time I had no doubt, when I

left the office, that the anchor in question was as safe as if on board my vessel, and that I should certainly have it the moment I claimed it. After losing two, I thought I had a right to demand one, and I requested that the first might be raised, offering at the same time to pay the expenses.

The person to whom I addressed myself was an ingenious sort of personage, who plundered upon principle: he believed, that to regulate his conduct by honour or honesty was merely to be a dupe, injuring himself without benefit to any one, for that others would continue to cheat if he did not. He accordingly laughed at my simplicity, and politely advised me to think no more of my anchors. As the loss however was of importance to me, and it would require a large sum to replace them, I was loath to take this advice, and I redoubled my inquiries and complaints. I had to apply to the port-captain T***, whose honesty was prover-

bial: he had amassed in this way a considerable fortune, and had since been seized with scruples as to the irregular proceedings of the officers of the port. His conscience did not urge him to the restitution of what he had acquired, but he wished to prevent others from doing the same. This was by no means agreeable to his colleagues, who, jealous of all interference in their concerns, paid little regard to the commands of an aged captain, whose physical and moral activity was very unequal to the task of watching over them; and thus, with all the honesty of their chief, the subalterns were knaves.

Mr. T***, in the english manner, *damning his eyes and soul,* swore that *my anchors should be found and returned to me.* The first part of his oath was accomplished; but the second was dispersed by the winds, for I never saw my anchors again. He very obligingly gave me an order to be supplied with a sloop, divers Blacks, and

a marine officer, to enable me to raise them myself. With this I returned in high spirits to the office of the port, where, after waiting half an hour, a person came to speak to me, who read the order twice over, and then carried it to a second, who also read it and sent it to a third, who was busy, and answered *very well.* It was not till an hour more, that, seeing me resolved to wait, this last took off his spectacles, and, approaching me, inquired my business. I told him that I had brought an order from Mr. T***, which would inform him. *Very well,* said he; and taking up the order, he put on his spectacles, after wiping them for some time, read the paper twice, returned it to its place, repeated his *very well,* and turned his back upon me.

I begged him to give directions on the subject, and inform me when I should be furnished with the articles mentioned in the paper; adding, that it was a matter of urgency, as my vessel was lying at single

·hor, and that I had not another on
·rd. The fatal *very well* was all the an-
·er I could obtain. The person to whom
·ad originally applied, and who had
·sed me to think no more of my an-
·s, now came in, and took up the or-
· after asking permission of the other,
· replied by a slight inclination of the
· and the two words he had used with
· it seemed indeed as if he knew no
·er. At last I was directed to call again
· next day.

I immediately provided myself with
·ew anchors to insure the safety of my
·essel: and, on the morrow, faithful to
·y appointment, I waited on Mr. *Very-
·ell*, who at this time did not utter a
·ord. An apprenticed pilot told me, that
·e was sent to attend me. I left the
office without delay, and hastened to the
·loop that was allotted me, with a diver
·nd twenty Blacks. In passing my vessel,
· took also ten of the best of my crew,
·nd two boats of the country, which were

then in my employ, which I man
with my own people, placing an off
in each. Arrived at the spot where I h
lost my anchor, I endeavoured in vain
the assistance of the men belonging t
port to find them. Their awkward
was so great, and appeared so unna
that I suspected some trick. I the
ordered my officers in the boats to
pointing to the place near which I
posed one of the anchors to be sunk,
they found it at the first attempt.
diver was then sent to examine its sit
tion, and fasten to it a rope with a slidir
knot; but he had scarcely reached th
bottom, when the log-line which I h
employed to drag with lost its hold.
now saw, that it had been privately c
dered, that I should not succeed. M
men dragged again, and again found th
anchor: but while I was preparing the
slip-knot, the pilot, on pretence of assist
ing me, drew the log-line against the sic
of the sloop, and it broke. We were th
obliged a third time to recommence th

attempt, and the diver made another fruitless trial to fasten the rope; at last he pretended that the anchor was sunk too deep in the mud, and said, that he was too much fatigued to dive any more. During these operations the flood-tide had been increasing, and it was now so strong, that it was necessary to suspend our efforts. The pilot agreed to leave the sloop at anchor on the spot, to serve as a mark in resuming our attempts on the morrow: to which I consented. At day-break however I looked in vain for the sloop; it was no longer there. I hastened to the port-officers, and was told, that they were wholly ignorant what was become of it, and they pretended to send in every direction to make inquiries: a trouble they might have saved themselves, for they knew perfectly well where it was. On the third day, they informed me, that the sloop was found, and they added to this information an account of the expenses which had been incurred, and which must immediately be paid; so much a-day for the sloop, so much for

the pilot for so many days, so much for the Lascars *ditto*, so much for the diver *ditto*, so much for port-charges, so much for the furniture of the sloop, so much for the cable, which broke, so much for the anchor, which was lost in consequence, so much for the Blacks who recovered the vessel, so much for those who brought it back to the port, so much for repairing the damages it had sustained; in short, there was no end to the items, of which the sum total amounted to five hundred and sixty-seven sicca rupees. It was useless to dispute these charges; the business must be ended and the money paid. When I returned to the officer for the purpose, one of the clerks pointed with his pen to Mr. *Very-well*, who took it without saying a word, cast his eye over the bill, counted the rupees, saluted me with a *very well*, and dismissed me; determined in my heart never to attempt the recovery of another anchor, though I should lose them by dozens. This instance was enough: I had lost in expenses more than the value

of the anchor, which I had dragged for to no purpose, and was unable to recover any of the others.

I complained loudly of this imposition; but was answered only by a shrug of the shoulders, and the cold consolation, "It is a sad thing for you, but every body must live." In reality, foreign vessels never recover any thing which is lost in this anchorage. Some english captains, indeed, who are favoured, may occasionally experience a better treatment; but these exceptions are few. The officers of the port seize the opportunity of low water to raise the anchors that have been lost, and they sell them without scruple to whoever may want them.

I hope to be excused this slight sally of resentment, which the recollection of the injustice of which I have been the spectator and the victim has torn from me: I could not resist the impulse, nor abstain from the disclosure of such odious prac-

tices, though at the risk of offending certain individuals whom I have avoided naming. It is the last time, however, that I shall cite any one before the tribunal of the reader; hereafter I shall leave to that of their own conscience those who, renouncing every sentiment of honour and hospitality, can employ the portion of authority with which they are intrusted, in robbing, at the distance of five thousand leagues from their country, the people whom they ought to protect. At the extremity of Asia all Europeans are countrymen, or at least should consider themselves as such.

The citadel of Calcutta is an octagon, on the first plan of Vauban. Five of the faces are regular, while the forms of the other three, which front the river, are according to the fancy of the engineer, by whom the fortress was built. As no approach is to be feared on this side, and the citadel can only be attacked by water, the river coming up to the glacis, it was

merely necessary to present to vessels making such attempt a superiority of fire, and to provide the means of discovering them at a distance, in order to disable them the moment they should arrive within cannon-shot. These purposes have been attained by giving the citadel towards the water the form of a large salient angle, the faces of which enfilade the course of the river. From these faces the guns continue to bear upon the object, till it approaches very near the capital: but then they are flanked on each side by a front parallel to the border of the river, which would fire with great effect on vessels lying with their broadsides opposite to it. This part is likewise defended by adjoining bastions and a counter-guard that covers them. The five regular fronts are on the land-side; the bastions have all very salient orillons, behind which are retired circular flanks extremely spacious, and an inverse double flank at the height of the berme, in the same situation as the tenaille of Belidor. This double flank would be

an excellent defence, and would the better serve to retard the passage of the ditch, as from its form it cannot be enfiladed. The orillon preserves it from the effect of ricochet-shot, and it is not to be seen from any parallel. The assailants must gain possession of the covered way, make strong lodgments there, and construct batteries of a superior force, before they can silence it, for it can only be cannonaded from the counterscarp. The berme opposite the curtain serves as a road to it, and contributes to the defence of the ditch, like a fausse-braie. The ditch is dry, with a cunette in the middle, which receives the water of the Ganges by means of two sluices, that are commanded by the fort: the counterscarp and covered way are excellent. From some air-holes which I saw in the ramparts, I suppose the master-gallery to have been constructed behind the counter-forts of the revêtement. The glacis are mined, if I may judge from the gates or entrances to the galleries which I saw at the re-entring angles of the covered

way, on the side towards the country: every curtain is covered with a large half-moon, without flanks, or bonnet, or redoubt; but the faces mount thirteen pieces of artillery each, thus giving to the defence of these ravelins a fire of six-and-twenty guns. The demi-bastions, which terminate the five regular fronts on each side, are covered by a counter-guard, of which the faces, like the half-moons, are pierced with thirteen embrasures. These counter-guards are connected with two redoubts, constructed in the place of arms of the adjacent re-entering angles: the whole is faced and palisadoed with care, is kept in admirable condition, and can make a vigorous defence against any army however formidable. The advanced works are executed on an extensive scale, and the angles of the half-moons, being extremely acute, project a great way into the country, so as to be in view of each other beyond the flanked angle of the polygon, and take the trenches in the rear at an early period of the approach.

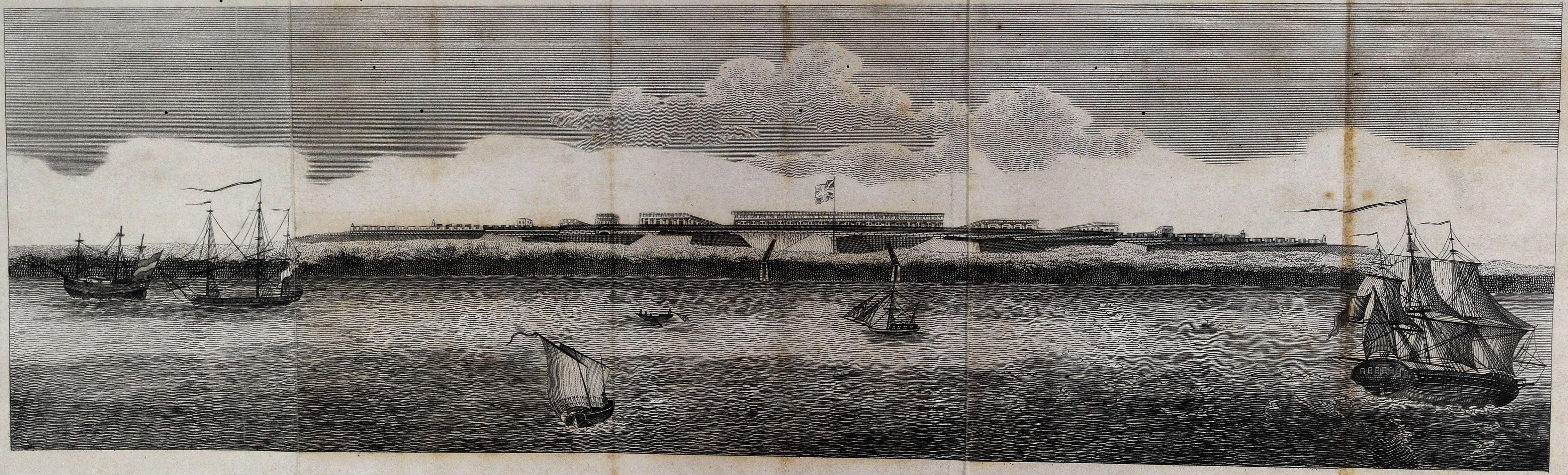
The name of this citadel is Fort William. It is larger and capable of a more regular and scientific defence than that of Fort St. George at Madras. It is not, like Fort St. George, filled with houses, but contains only the buildings that are necessary, such as the residence of the governor, quarters for the officers and troops, and arsenals. Exclusively of these, the interior of the fort is perfectly open, and offers nothing to the sight but superb grass-plots, gravel walks planted occasionally with trees, balls, bombs, cannons, and whatever can give to the place a grand, noble, and military appearance. Each gate has a house over it destined for the residence of a major.

These houses, like every other in the fort, are so many magnificent palaces. At the period of my last voyage, the governor was colonel Morgan, who filled the station with honour, and behaved to strangers with great politeness. One day, on leaving table, we accompanied him

to his closet, where was preserved with extraordinary care a superb full-length portrait of Lewis XV. in complete armour: it had been taken at Pondicherry, and had thence been removed to Bengal. The colonel was eager to draw my attention to it. I was pleased to emotion with the respect that was paid to it, but felt at the same time a sentiment of regret at seeing it in the hands of our enemies: it seemed as if his majesty was a prisoner of war. This idea recalled strongly to my memory the series of our defeats in Asia, and forced from me a sigh, which did not escape the governor; but his delicate and constant politeness soon dissipated the melancholy impression which these reflexions wrought upon my mind.

END OF VOL. I.

S. HAMILTON, PRINTER,
FALCON-COURT, FLEET-STREET.



View of Fort William, the Citadel of Calcutta